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What wonders are awaiting you at this year's Flower Show? Well, grab your suntan lotion and take a visit to "Festival de las Flores," a spectacular Central Feature display of Latin-inspired plantings. Shake off the bitter chill of winter and come to the Pennsylvania Convention Center from March 2-9 to see a world of tropical plants and other South-of-the-border delights.

16 Stunning Succulents

Succulents are a hot property in the horticultural world, as gardeners all over begin learning about their subtle textures and low-maintenance virtues. Among the best growers of succulents and cacti in the country is Dr. Gerald Barad, who along with his wife Bea, has one of the best and largest collections around. They also exhibit their magical plants at the Flower Show every year to great acclaim. Come see a few of their plant gems for yourself.

24 In the "Horticourt"

Beyond all the fabulous exhibits at the Show are the amazing plants themselves. No where is this more apparent than in the Horticourt, where entrants put the world's finest plants up for competition year after year. In this photo essay, you can view several of these horticultural masterworks up close and personal. Prepare to be "wowed."

34 Treasuring Tree Peonies

As if herbaceous peonies weren't enchanting enough, tree peonies are twice as much fun. Use them as dramatic focal points and enjoy their prolific blossoms and wide color range, including lovely shades of yellow. In our region, one of the top growers of tree peonies is Peonyland near Quakertown, PA. Join us on a tour of this specialty nursery to learn more about the venerable tree peony, a plant that's been in cultivation for nearly 1,600 years.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo by Floyd Limbos

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GREEN scene

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The Tropical Touch

If you haven't gotten into the tropical look for your garden just yet, that may change after this year's Philadelphia Flower Show. Given the 2003 Show's Latin-American theme, your senses are sure to be dazzled by bold colors, sensual textures, and plants and trees of dizzying scale. But supposing you do catch the tropical bug—how will you incorporate these South-of-the-border concepts into your genteel home landscape? Actually, it's not as hard as it looks. Here are a few basic tips:

Haul Out the Houseplants. Many of us actually already have tropical plants, it's just that we call them "houseplants." Many are actually tropicals or tender perennials that thrive all year in their native countries.

When all danger of frost has passed this spring (generally after May 15 in Zone 6 and April 30 in Zone 7), grab that *ho-hum* philodendron, cactus or jade plant sitting by the living room window and put it in your garden. You can either dig a hole and sink the entire pot in the ground, or just place the container at ground level and hide its base within the foliage of another plant. Sited among typical annuals and perennials, your houseplants will suddenly take on a dramatic flair, adding exotic patterns and shapes to the bed or container. It's a sinfully simple way to add some zip to your garden.

Be as daring as you want—just think "outside the pot." That once-boring spider plant will take on new sizzle in a container with bright red or pink impatiens. Pelargoniums, succulents and many other houseplants also enjoy a summer vacation in the garden (check the web or a reputable garden book for specific plant requirements). The only caveat is that you should check for insects before you bring the plants back indoors at the end of the season. Sometimes, a mild insecticidal soap may be required. And don't forget to bring them inside before the cold weather returns in the fall.

Annual Appeal. Using hot-colored annuals has been a big trend for several years now. Since the tropical palette veers towards hotter primary colors and variegated patterns, steer your purchases towards annuals of that ilk: coleus, impatiens, zinnia, castor bean, and verbena (such as the airy and enchanting *Verbena bonariensis,* which is often grown as an annual).

And don't forget the vines. Annual vines and trailing plants are great for the tropical effect, too. From the popular purple hyacinth bean (*Lablab purpureus*) to sweet-potato vine (*Ipomoea* sp.) to winners like cardinal climber (*Ipomoea* x *multifida*) and black-eyed Susan vine (*Thunbergia alata*), there are dozens to choose from. [For more on annual vines, read Nancy J. Ondra's fascinating article, "Climbing the Walls," in the May, 2000 issue.]

100-Watt Bulbs. When it comes to big, splashy color, turn on a few bulbs. Known in the trade as "summer bulbs," these bulbs, tubers and rhizomes will all burst into a huge variety of colors, shapes and sizes when the warm weather comes.

There are great summer performers you already know—dahlias, cannas, gladiolus, elephant ears, and caladiums—as well as those you should experiment with, like crocosmia, bletilla, nerine, and colorful gingers galore (*Curcuma* sp.). All are sure to pull your garden a little closer to the equator.

Big Plants. If you have a large, sunny room to store them in winter, big plants and smaller trees can easily turn on the tropical heat in your outdoor plot. I envy those with space to keep brugmansias alive all winter, if only for the chance to once savor those amazing, trumpet-shaped flowers in summer. "*Someday,*" I keep telling myself.

And what about palms, ferns and banana trees? With space and, more importantly, a willing partner to help you lug them outside in late spring, these big plants can transform a simple patio into a Latin veranda begging for someone to dance the tango. (For just such a veranda, visit Chanticleer in Wayne, PA during the summer months and peek behind the entrance building at the sumptuous tropical courtyard.)

I don't know about you, but I'm already excited about the *thousands* of tropical plants awaiting me at the 2003 Show. It may be winter outside, but come March at the Pennsylvania Convention Center, this year's Philadelphia Flower Show will surely turn on the heat.

Pete Brown

email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*



A Campus Haven

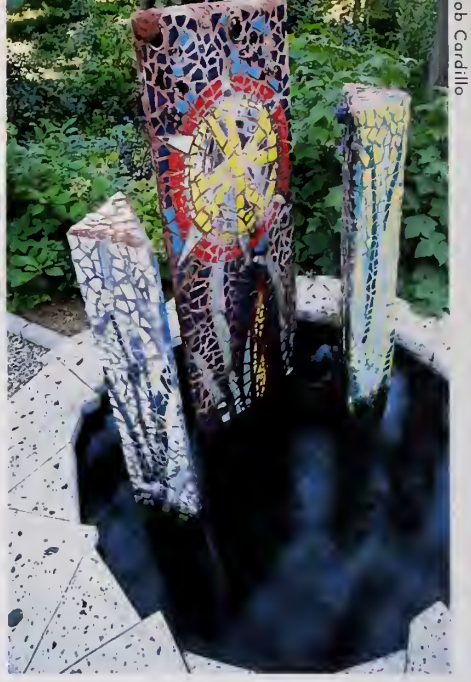
by Jane Carroll

At the close of the Philadelphia Flower Show, when the excitement is over and the flowers have begun to fade, exhibitors spend many hours dismantling the elaborate displays that took months or years to conceive, design and construct. Sometimes, though, exhibits find a whole new life after leaving the Convention Center floor.

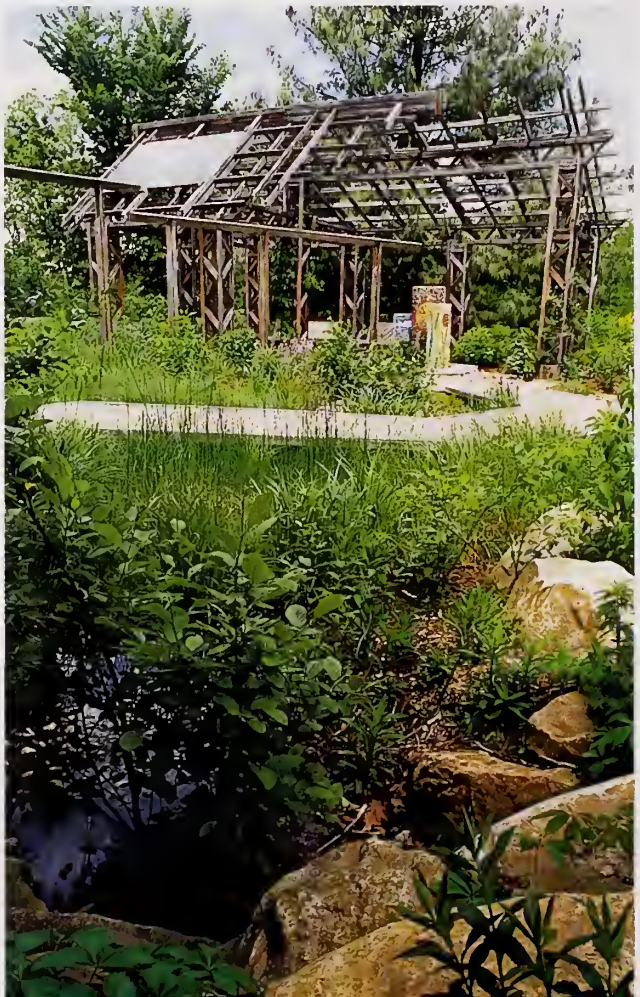
For one award-winning Flower Show display, its new incarnation is even more inspiring than the first. On the Ambler campus of Temple University, a lovely outdoor water garden has been created using materials from a 1997 exhibit, "The Green Machine." The exhibit, which won a "Best of Show" award, was designed and created by students in Temple's department of landscape architecture and horticulture.

During the past few years, Professor David and students from his "Design/Build Studio" have been busy transforming the exhibit into the newest garden on the university's Ambler campus (also known as the Landscape Arboretum at Temple University Ambler). Like the "Green Machine," the "Sustainable Wetland Garden" demonstrates environmentally sound design that can help protect watersheds.

The Rose Valley Creek winds its way through this verdant campus before joining Wissahickon Creek in Philadelphia's Fairmount Park, and, eventually, the Schuylkill River. But it's not just a simple matter of water flowing from point A to point B. As Professor David explains, "Rainwater falls onto building roofs, roadways and lawns, picking up chemicals, fertilizers and other contaminants and carrying them into our rivers and streams."



Rob Cardillo



Rob Cardillo

The Sustainable Wetland Garden offers a creative solution. As the creek flows through the campus, special swales in the garden direct excess water into mini-wetlands planted with native grasses, where microorganisms break down pollutants. Overhead, an aerial aqueduct captures rainwater from the roof of a nearby building, and solar panels atop a pergola convert the sun's energy into electricity for pumps and a fountain. Permeable paving blocks—embedded with multi-colored recycled glass—allow water to soak into the soil.

But in addition to all this "green technology," the small garden is notable for its beauty and serenity. Triangular lattices adorn the supporting columns, a pattern echoed in the paving stones. Colorful recycled tiles and glass were used to decorate the central fountain. Water trickling though the fountain and aqueduct, the shade of a native honeysuckle climbing the pergola, and grasses and wildflowers rustling in the breeze combine to create a cooling, soothing environment. The Sustainable Wetland Garden is not just a model of forward-thinking design, it's an irresistible place to meet, read, study, or just relax and enjoy the view.

For more information about the Sustainable Wetland Garden or the Landscape Arboretum at Temple University Ambler, please call (215) 283-1292 or visit *www.ambler.temple.edu*

Top: The mahonia's beautiful powder-blue berries.

Bottom: It's showy flower clusters.



Pete Prown

The Leatherleaf Mahonia

Born to be Blue

The leatherleaf mahonia (*Mahonia japonica* 'Bealei') is truly a treasure in the garden in all seasons. While not a true holly, this mahonia does have holly-like foliage. It is actually a member of the BERBERIDACEAE or barberry family.

Unlike most of the hollies (*Ilex* sp.), *Mahonia japonica* 'Bealei' has a very large showy blossom. Its fragrant yellow flowers are arranged along numerous upright flower clusters, each of which can grow to 6 inches in length, resulting in large fountain-like clusters of flowers that bloom in early spring. They are a welcome sight, especially after the long winter season.

Named as a PHS Gold Medal Award winner in 1998, this shrub also develops intense indigo blue clusters of 1/2 to 5/8" berries, which follow the flowers and mature in mid summer. At this time, this mahonia is stunning and it isn't long after the fruit develops that friends and neighbors start asking, "What is this shrub?" and "Are the fruits *edible*?" The fruit display can be short lived, however, since foraging birds seem to love the berries.

Mahonia japonica 'Bealei' grows best in part shade in a site sheltered from winter sun and wind. It prefers moist, well-drained acid soil, though it also adapts to more alkaline soil. Winter exposure to extremes of sun or wind can cause leaf scorch.

If given its preferred conditions, the leatherleaf mahonia will grow slowly up to 8 feet high and 5 feet wide. When grown in groups, the intense colors of the flower and fruit create a spectacular show in any landscape.

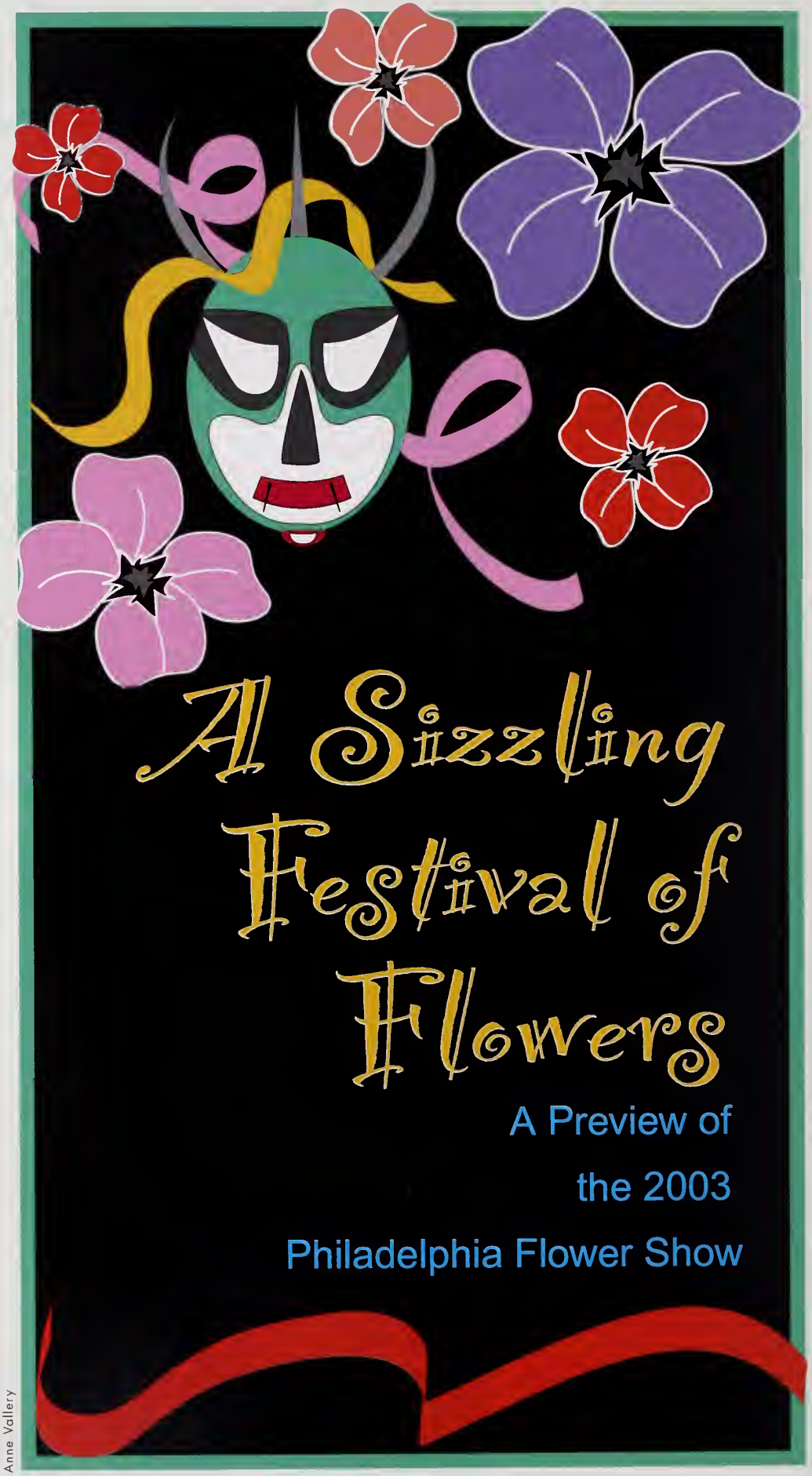
This plant also makes an excellent barrier due to prominent spines on the foliage—they're *very* sharp, so beware. When pruning out discolored leaves or branches, I usually hold the clippings in my pruner until I can dispose of them.

Mahonia japonica 'Bealei' is native to China and was introduced in the west in 1845. Its showy lemon yellow flowers and exquisite blue fruit, its utility as a bsarrier, and its evergreen foliage, all make this mahonia a shrub that deserves wider use.

—Marilyn Romenesko



Marilyn Romenesko



Anne Vallery

By Dorothy Wright

From grand displays to miniature arrangements, the 2003 Philadelphia Flower Show—this year, titled "Festival de las Flores" ("Festival of the Flowers")—is a vibrant celebration of Latin American color, scents, imagination and rhythms. Come in from the cold and experience the warm delights of a Caribbean island fiesta, a bustling Mexican cantina, a fragrant South American woodland, and much more.

Inspired by the Puerto Rican coastal town of Loiza (pronounced "Louisa"), one of the show's Central Feature highlights the exotic tropical plants, vivid colors and lively music that characterize the town's African-Latin heritage. On an island well-known for its fiestas, Loiza's three-day tribute to Santiago (St. James) each July is perhaps the most eagerly anticipated.

"The festival incorporates beautifully colored costumes and masks, some of which are interwoven with flowers," explains Ed Lindemann, designer and director of the Philadelphia Flower Show. "The music is wonderful—African music with a Latin flair—you can't stand still when you hear it."

With this in mind, the first of the central feature displays replicates the festival at Loiza. "Costumed characters will greet visitors as they pass through a very colorful portal with lots of flowers," Lindemann says. "Then they will find themselves on the main street as the festival is in full swing."

As interpreted by Robertson's of Philadelphia, the Spanish colonial architecture of the plaza will be set off by flower-filled urns and thousands of tropical plants. A replica of San Patricio Church, the oldest active parish church on the island, will be beautifully decorated for a wedding. With an outside wall of the church as a backdrop, musicians and dancers from the Puerto Rican arts community will perform on a beach under palm trees.

By the end of October, Bruce Robertson, Jr. and an associate, Barney DeFusco, had already been on two buying trips to Florida and ordered thousands of tropical plants of some 35 to 40 varieties, including *Begonia*, *Ixora* (West Indian jasmine), *Musa* (banana), *Codiaeum* (croton), *Heliconia* (lobster's claw, parrot's flower), *Strelitzia* (bird-of-paradise), *Canna*, *Hibiscus*, and a variety of palms and ferns.

The company constructed a new greenhouse to hold the plants for the Flower Show. "Ordinarily, we are not actively working on our Flower Show exhibit until the first of the year, after the holiday season," Robertson explains. "But given the size of the central feature—10,000 square feet—we need to be able to carefully control the lighting, feeding and other aspects of plant care and the forcing schedules of the blooms. It will be a cat-and-mouse game; we'll have to keep tweaking it."


Floyd Limbos

Robertson's, a fourth-generation family florist, has been involved in the Flower Show for some 35 years, most recently winning the 2002 Philadelphia Trophy for "Here Comes the Bride," which featured a live bridal show. The plaza at Loiza is designed by Robertson, DeFusco and Robertson's greenhouse manager, Gwen Taylor, who also will supervise the installation. Peter's Garden & Company of Quakertown will also donate antique terra-cotta olive jars for the exhibit.

Iris Brown, a staff member of Philadelphia's Norris Square Civic Association, and a native of Loiza, was instrumental in bringing the theme to reality and enlisting the support of the Puerto Rican community in Norris Square, as well as back home. Brown and her neighbors are frequent award-winners in the PHS City Gardens Contest.

"Before this year's show, we had never done a Latin theme," Lindemann explains. "Through Philadelphia Green, PHS has worked with people of many different ethnic backgrounds. One of the groups I have watched with interest over the years is the Norris Square Civic Association. When I told Iris about my idea for a Latin festival atmosphere, she began to smile and tell me about her home town. That's how it all started."

Brown is serving as a consultant to the 2003 Flower Show. "We couldn't have done it without her," Lindemann says.



Steve Maurer



An enthusiastic visitor to the Flower Show likes to *wear* his garden.

SOUTH OF THE BORDER WITH A TWIST

The Philadelphia Flower Show excels at taking a familiar theme and carrying it out in imaginative and delightful ways. Thus the "Old Tijuana Cantina" offers a South-of-the-Border experience, but with a twist. "The 10 characters in this Mexican cantina, from the mariachi band to an old hound dog asleep by the bar, are life-size topiary figures," says Lindemann.

The elements of this exhibit were executed by Patricia Riley Hammer, owner of Samia Rose Topiary in Encinitas, California and author of *The New Topiary*, written while Hammer was a senior gardener in charge of indoor topiary at Longwood Gardens.

Ivies form the foundation of the figures, accented with an assortment of specialty plants that add more color and detail. "I have an incredible collection of ivies, and I am trying to find those that best express the character of the figures," Hammer explains. "For example, the dancing man wears a dress coat made of 'Shamrock' ivy—my most formal, dark green ivy. His partner wears a billowing flowered skirt created with ivy and accent plants. The mariachi players are wearing 'Golden Ingot' ivy, the American Ivy Society's 2003 Ivy of the Year."

FLOWERING DREAMS

Opposites attract in "Sueños Florecientes de la Noche" ("Flowering Dreams of the Night"), the final element of the Central Feature. "I am using a lot of hot-colored flowers in a soft, peaceful setting," explains Jamie Rothstein, owner of Jamie Rothstein Distinctive Floral Designs, Philadelphia, who is a floral and décor designer for social occasions and corporate events.

The setting is a midsummer's evening. "The landscape will feature a woodland setting with a pond surrounded by irises and grasses," Rothstein says. "Iron water sprites and hand-blown glass bubbles will float in the pond, and a giant lily pad will hold a table set for two. A dream-like mural

inspired by the paintings of Maxfield Parrish will form the backdrop. We'll feature a lot of varieties of South American roses and hydrangea."

Visitors strolling the path and bridge will be sheltered by an umbrella of flowering quince. "I've always thought that there is something wonderful about walking under a canopy of branches," Rothstein says.

HOT! HOT! HOT!

The excitement spills over into the entryways, balconies and other settings of the competitive classes. For example, "Entries in the balcony class, '¿Que Pasa?' ['What's Happening?'], overlook an imaginary plaza that is holding a celebration," says Libby Hill, chair of the Competitive Classes. "For 'Hospitality, Latin Style,' Harriton High School is creating an entryway called 'Los Dias de Muertos,' reflecting a Mexican 'Day of the Dead' celebration." And in horticulture, special classes focus on plants native to Central or South America.

"We're anticipating a huge explosion of color and a real variety, both for exhibitors and visitors," says Hope Fox Coates, chair of the Arrangement Classes. The vividly painted houses of Old San Juan are the inspiration for an open space challenge class featuring arrangements against colorful painted panels.

In contrast, on "Degas Day at the Flower Show," open space and defined space classes will pay tribute to the Philadelphia Museum of Art's concurrent exhibit, "Degas and the Dance." Special PMA/Flower Show tour packages will be available.

FLOWER ARRANGING WITH...GREGOR LERSCH

On March 5 and 6, an open space class, "Go with the Flow," celebrates a demonstration, reception and book signing with noted German floral designer Gregor Lersch, author of *Principles of Flower Arranging*. "There are some exciting things happening in Europe in floral design, and it shows up at the Flower Show, especially in

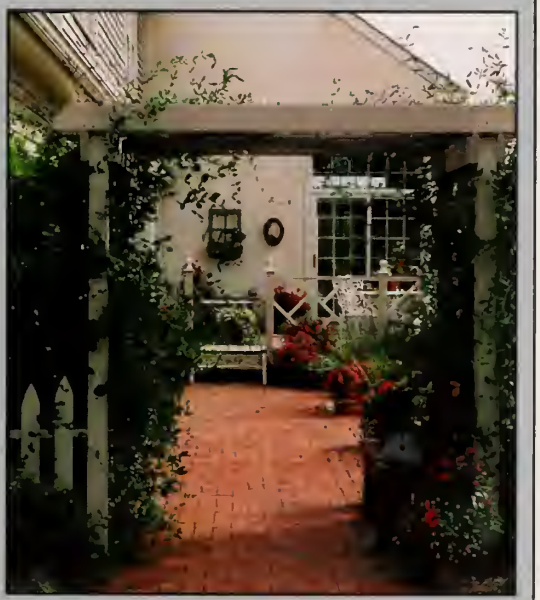


Rob Ikeler

The grand entrance to the 2002 Flower Show.

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the AIFD and Competitive Class exhibits," notes Melinda Moritz, vice-chair of the competitive classes. "Recently we have been hearing Gregor's name over and over, so we are very pleased that he will speak at the Flower Show this year for the first time."

In another first, Moritz says that the tables class will be "front and center," with chandeliers to complement the table settings for "¡Buen Provecho!" ("May you enjoy your meal!").

This year also reflects a burst of competition in miniature settings, which is one of the highlights of the show. "People who have watched from the wings or who have not competed in years have said, 'let's do it!'" Hill says.

MAGICAL GARDENS

In the garden class, "Magical Gardens," exhibitors join together to create gardens inspired by the magical realism arts movement of Latin America. "We Latin Americans live on two levels—the *seen* and the *unseen*," notes Carmen Herrera von Wrangell, chair of the Garden Class.

Competing for the first time in the garden class is Philadelphia artist Isaiah Zagar, whose elaborate mosaics comprising mirrors, tiles and found objects adorn many buildings in Philadelphia, including the Painted Bride Art Center. And the daughters of Stanley Amey, the president of the award-winning Men's Garden Club of Philadelphia, will create a little family rivalry with their own Flower Show exhibit. Dierdre, Adrienne, and Elizabeth Amey's design will feature dark-colored flowers and plants that evoke an exotic New Orleans garden at night.

Lindemann says the generosity of the community has been one of the most rewarding aspects of this year's Flower Show. "Already, what has been gratifying to me—although we haven't even started to move in and set up—has been the enormous contribution of people from various cultural backgrounds toward the success of the Flower Show. It's going to give the Show a warm, multicultural quality."

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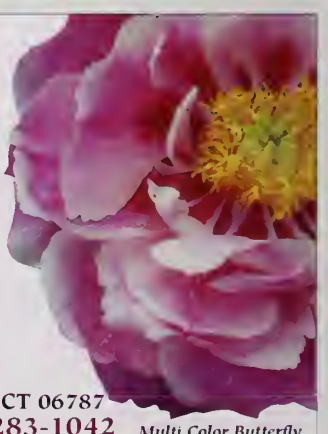
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2003 Philadelphia Flower Show

Dates:
March 2-9, 2003

Theme: *Festival de las Flores!*
("Festival of the Flowers")

Information:
Phone: (215) 988-8899
(recorded info)
Web site:
www.theflowershow.com

Location:
Pennsylvania Convention Center
12th & Arch Streets,
Philadelphia, PA

Hours:
Sundays, March 2 and 9,
8am - 6pm
Monday-Friday, March 3 - 7,
10am - 9:30pm
Saturday, March 8,
8am - 9:30pm

Producer:
THE PENNSYLVANIA HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Tickets at the Door:
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Monday - Friday,
March 3 - 7: $20
Saturday & Sunday,
March 8 - 9: $22

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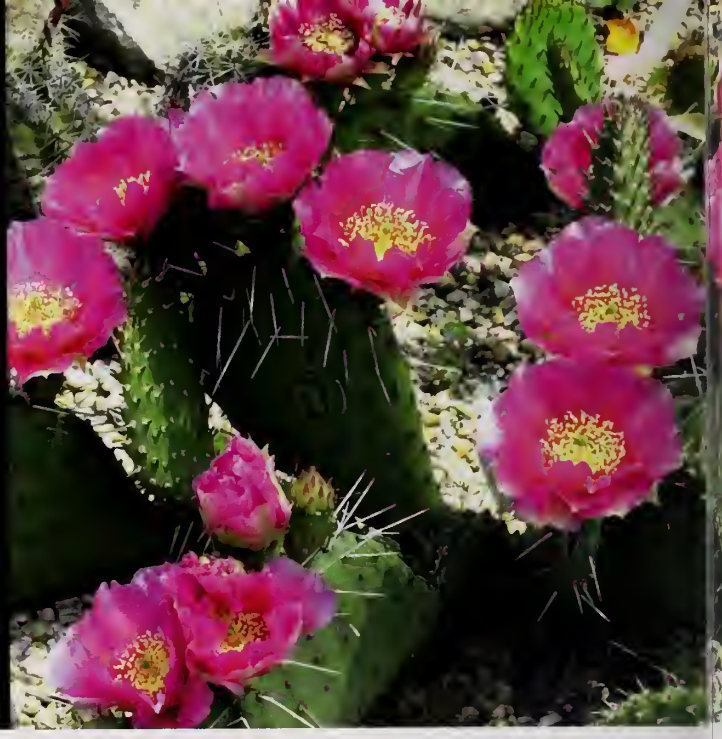
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OBSESSION

The Incomparable Cactus and Succulent Collection of Jerry and Bea Barad

Story by Patricia A. Taylor

At first glance, one would never perceive the obsession that lurks beneath the friendly, welcoming demeanor of Jerry and Bea Barad. But, should you visit their west central New Jersey home and, even more revealing, their greenhouses, you would quickly understand why the Barad name is legend in the world of cacti and succulents. The Barad name is also legend at the Philadelphia Flower Show, where they have won numerous awards for their window displays and, in Jerry's case, trophies in individual plant categories.

Obsession is not uncommon among exhibitors at the Flower Show. For their part, the Barads are obsessed with obtaining as many species, forms, and varieties of cacti and succulents as possible, not to mention growing each to a state of perfection. Their dedication to the Philadelphia Flower Show manifests itself in the *months* they spend preparing for their exhibits, to say nothing about their 4 AM risings on blustery March days to cart all their carefully groomed and pampered plants to the Convention Center.

The pair's plant odyssey began over 50 years ago while they were living in Manhattan and Jerry was attending Cornell Medical School. They visited an uncle on Long Island one afternoon and there they saw his cactus collection. The two were fascinated with the forms and colors and immediately thought that one or two such plants would be perfect for the windowsill in their Manhattan apartment. The rest, as the saying goes, is history: their approximately 10,000 plants today constitute the largest private collection of cacti and succulents on the East Coast.

From Manhattan, they moved to the Flemington, New Jersey area, where Jerry established his obstetrics/gynecology practice and the couple raised four children. Despite their busy life, they continued to expand their cactus collection and, later, their succulents. Indeed, as Jerry explained in a recent interview, most cacti are classified as succulents, defined as plants that store

Clockwise from upper left:

1) *Haworthia mirabilis paradoxa*

2) Opuntias flowering in the hardy cactus bed, June, 2002.

3) *Euphorbia susannae*

4) Jerry and Bea Barad

5) A sampling of the Barad's collection.

6) *Tacitus bellis*, (also called *Graptopetalum bellum* by some authors).



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water. In broadening the collection, they were only following a natural progression.

During the decades following medical school, the two had exhibited at the New York Flower Show and been elected "king and queen" of an annual meeting of the Cactus & Succulent Society of America. During this period, Jerry also served as president of the Society and was actively involved in its journal.

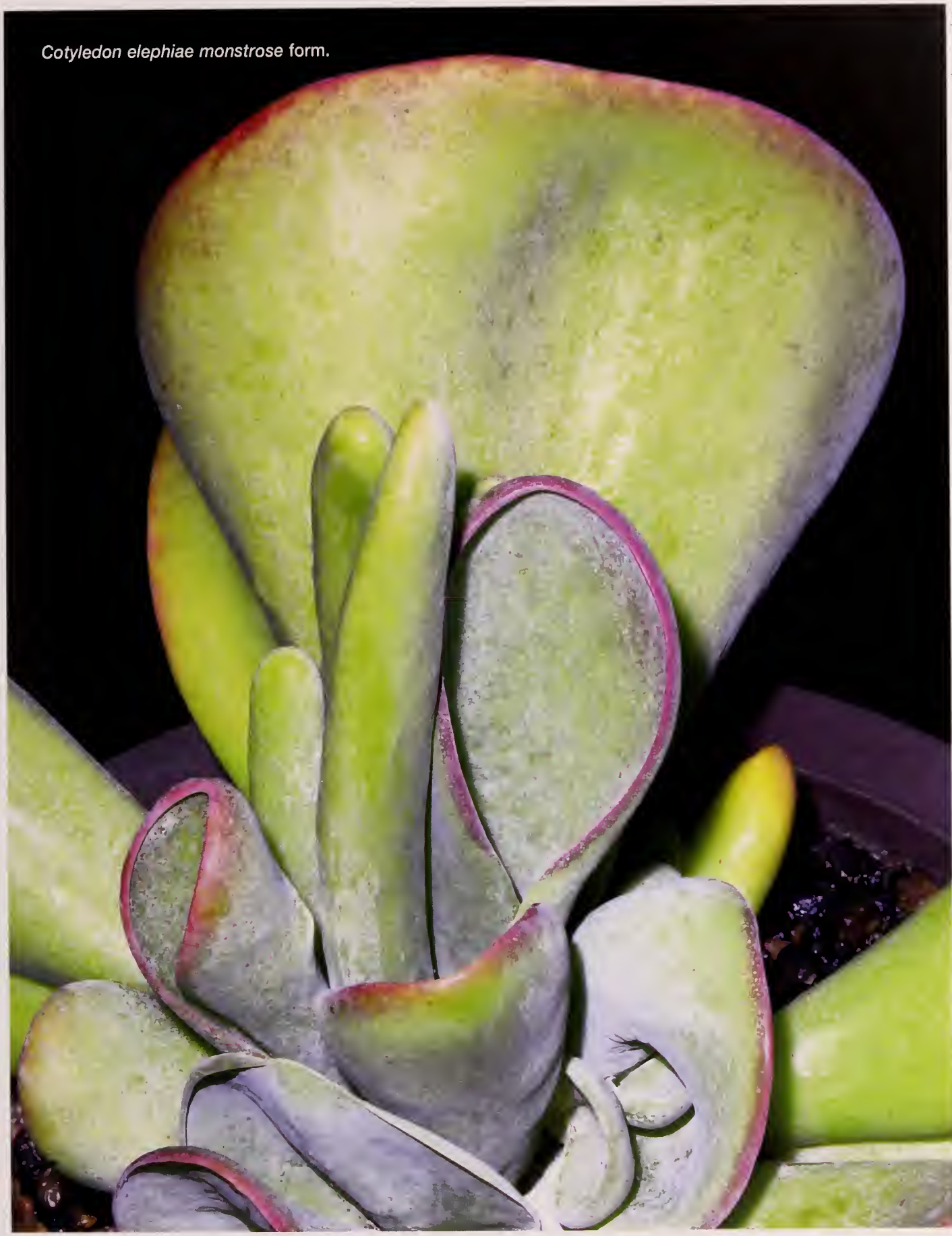
Then, in the 1980s, when a patient of one of his colleagues asked him to participate in the Philadelphia Flower Show, Jerry saw it as a superb opportunity to educate the public on a wonderful group of plants. Bea, as had been true before, was enlisted as his co-designer and assistant plant tender and mover.

The two entered the window category, in which a collection of 10 or more plants are shown in a window-like space with clear glass shelves. The exhibit may be viewed from only three sides and all plants must be rooted and potted. At the time, Jerry had no idea what was truly involved in such a display. He felt that all he had to do was grow some superb plants and put them in the window. To his chagrin, he found that this is not the case—a fact made blatantly clear when his first displays didn't win a single award.

In scrutinizing exhibits that did win ribbons and trophies, Jerry quickly realized that it was not only the quality of the plants that counted but also the underlying aesthetics of the display itself. He then began to choose his plants as both single specimens and integral parts of a whole that would present a stunning picture of colors, forms, and shapes.

He constructed mock-ups specifying particular attributes. In order to show as many of his beloved plants as possible, he designed and built special platforms—dubbed "small" and "tall"—that allow plants to be placed at different heights in the display. Such careful precision enabled him to exhibit 53 plants in his award-winning window display last year.

It is one thing to pack so many plants in a defined space and to artistically compose them with regard to size, shape, color, and form. It is another for a viewer to still be able to distinguish the special qualities of



Cotyledon elephiae monstrose form.

All photos by Gerald Borad and Patricia Taylor



Jerry's custom-made plant stands that are used at the Flower Show.

each plant. That last aspect of a Show exhibit bothered Jerry. As he says, "Visitors to the Show either look down at the plants in the display—especially those on the sill part—or view them at eye level, such as the plants on the top glass shelf." He wanted people to view his succulents from every angle and to appreciate their inherent beauty.

That thinking led him to commission Philadelphia potter Elayne Toizer to transform his designs into special containers for his display. Among her creations are the circular pots that anchor the exhibit and contain the rare rosettes of *Aeonium tabuliforme*. These exquisitely warm green plants grow solely off northwest Africa on the cliffs of the Canary Islands. Jerry pots two divisions of these plants in early September, knowing (well, he does cross his fingers a little bit) that they will have slowly expanded to cover the entire top circumference by Show time.

September is also the month when Jerry starts the long process of potting and trimming all the other candidates for his Show display. Since he generally prepares about



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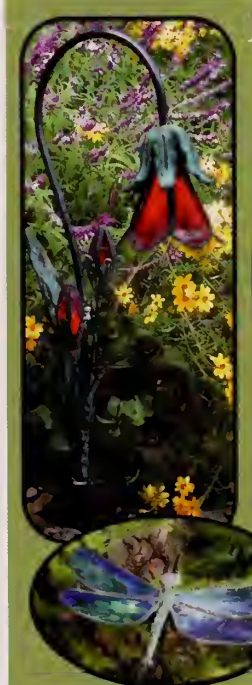
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The Barads' masterful "window display" at the 2002 Flower Show.

three times as many plants as he has room for, he submits the botanical names for about 150 of them to the nomenclature committee in January. This volunteer committee ensures that the name of every exhibited plant is horticulturally current and accurate. (With all the changes botanists keep throwing at the general public, this is not an easy task.)

Two weeks before the show, Jerry reviews all his assembled, correctly named plants and then starts the job of selecting those that are the very finest and placing them according to the requirements of his mock-up. Bea closely supervises this aspect, viewing the display as a whole rather than a collection of individual plants.

The week before the Show, the chosen plants are all moved to a specially built heated shed. The Friday night before opening, Jerry and Bea back a vehicle into the shed and carefully pack all the plants. Then, they set their alarm and prepare to leave in the predawn darkness of the Show's opening Saturday.

Since there is space for only four window categories at the Show, the exhibits are changed on Wednesday to broaden the scope of competitors. The Barad exhibit is cleared out by 6:30 AM on Wednesday, which is "pretty cruel," Jerry notes, but which does, he acknowledges, give time for the next exhibitors to prepare their displays.

After unloading the plants on Wednesday, Jerry spends Thursday preparing and packing all his entries for the individual plant categories. Once again, the Barad alarm is set for an early hour and the two bring these plants to the Show on Friday morning.

Flower Show week is, in many respects, a tiring time for exhibitors. But it is also a time filled with a camaraderie fostered by friendships built over the years, as well as the excitement of competing in one of the world's best flower shows. Obsession or not, Jerry sums up the Show experience quite simply: "If it wasn't fun, we wouldn't do it."

Patricia Taylor is a freelance garden writer whose articles frequently appear in *The New York Times*.

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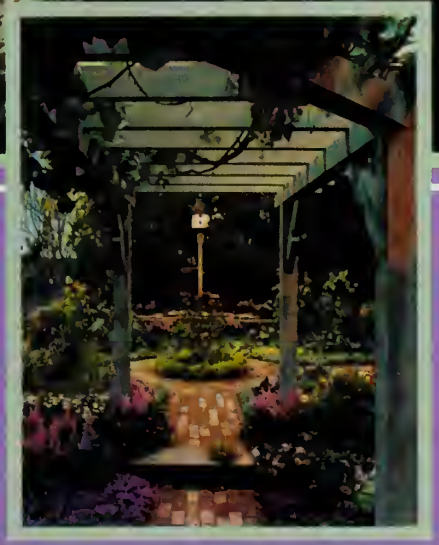
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Primula auricula, grown by Margaret P. Bowditch

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Photography by Pete Prown

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Primula cowichan, grown by Lee Morris Raden



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For more pictures from the 2002 Philadelphia Flower show, visit www.theflower-show.com and click on "Photo Gallery."

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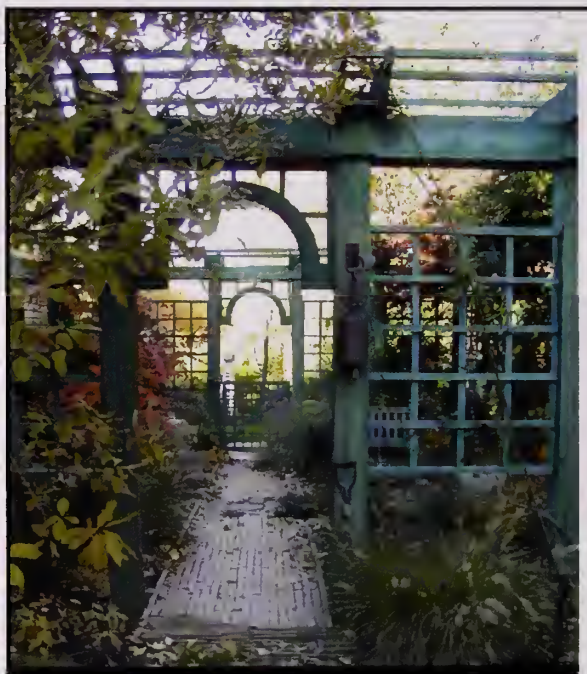
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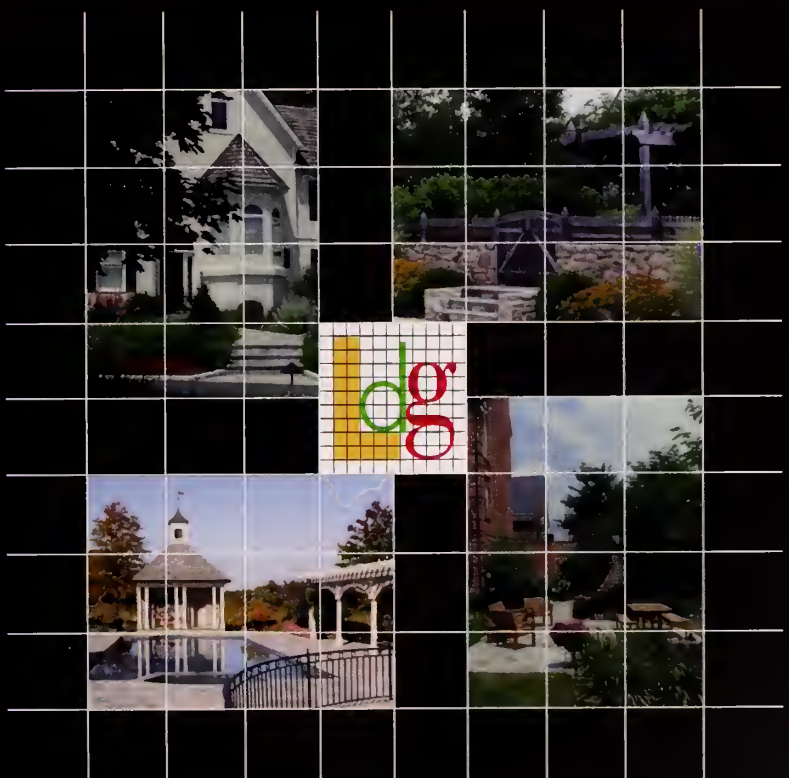
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Tree Peony

Many homeowners overlook the tree peony, regarding it as an old-fashioned, ant-attracting, fussy shrub that thwarts any attempt to achieve sophistication in the landscape. More experienced gardeners, however, have long appreciated peonies for both their form and function. When searching for a medium-sized flowering shrub, one would be hard pressed to find a plant that embodies the wonderfully diverse qualities of the tree peony.



Rob Cardillo

Paeonia suffruticosa 'Banksii'

Pleasures

by Jen Bartos



Tree Peony



Above: *Paeonia* 'Hoki' **Below:** *P.* 'Kukuryu-Nishiki'

ENTER PEONYLAND

For Michael Hsu, owner of PeonyLand near Quakertown, Pennsylvania, growing tree peonies has become an obsession. As the largest grower of Chinese tree peonies in the United States, Hsu goes to great lengths to make sure that homeowners, as well as those in the trade, "think peony" when selecting plants for their gardens.

The peony is showing signs of renewed popularity, according to Hsu. "Steven Spielberg used them as the centerpiece for his last big bash. When Paul McCartney got married last year, his bride carried a peony bouquet. And Bernard Shaw of CNN said that he looked forward to spending more time with his peonies after retirement," says Hsu, who bought his nursery along with his father. Although the two knew nothing about horticulture, they decided to take a stab at it after Michael's mother casually suggested they "grow flow-



Rob Cordillo

ers." Before long, they imported 60,000 tree peonies from China and eventually bought a farm there as well. The peonies are started by root division in China and shipped to the stateside nursery after two years. After another two years in the ground, they're ready for the market.

Lately, Hsu has been developing tree peonies with several varieties grafted onto a single rootstock, offering gardeners extended bloom time, increased color choices, and prized plants that are uniquely theirs. "It takes two to three years for us to produce a saleable plant of this nature, and some varieties don't take as well as others," he notes. Slower growing varieties, which are usually darker in color, haven't worked as well for Hsu, as their grafts usually take longer to knit, but he's working on it. "It's been done in China, but we're excited to be the first to bring this process to the United States," adds Hsu.

Hsu says that people frequently ask him to name a favorite tree peony. It doesn't take him long to answer with 'Hermosa Red'. In botanical journals dating from 1636, red-flowered varieties were said to have glowed in the dark (a few cultivars do have phosphorescent qualities) and were planted next to doorways to ward off evil spirits. Hsu also recommends another red variety: 'Red of the Dynasty'. A fast grower and prolific bloomer, 'Red of the Dynasty' will get gardeners off to a good start without requiring a large investment.

THE ANT MYTH

Another local gardener is already "thinking peony." David Maher, of David J. Maher Designs in Bridgeport, PA, has been building perennial gardens for the past 20 years, and all along, he's been helping homeowners overcome their negative feelings about peonies and the insects that enjoy them in the garden.

Says Maher, "I often hear, 'I love peonies, but I hate ants a lot more.'" He notes that many people mistakenly believe that ants are responsible for opening the peony's



ABOUT PEONIES

Members of the genus *Paeonia* grow only in the Northern Hemisphere, extending from Morocco and Spain through Europe's mountainous regions and the Mediterranean, to the Caucasus and central Asia. They are also found in China, Japan, and the western United States.

The genus is divided into three sections: Paeonia, Moutan and Onaepia. Paeonia is composed of about 28 herbaceous species native to China and Europe. Onaepia is the smallest group, with only two herbaceous species native to the western US. Moutan contains about eight species, all of which are referred to as tree peonies and are indigenous to China.

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Tree Peony



Rob Cordillo

P. 'Kamada-nishiki'.

blossoms. "The blooms open when the time is right, ant or no ant. I use gentle insect deterrents in some gardens if the homeowner won't let go of the 'ant thing,'" Maher says.

It's a shame that such a beautiful flower has been passed over by many a gardener, simply for the fear of bringing ants into the house. The solution is easy: before bringing cut peonies into the house, turn them upside down and give them a good shaking. That should knock any little fellow out of the petals and back into the garden. "Cut them in the cool morning before the sugars have a chance to really get moving," Maher advises. "The sweet nectar that fuels the growth and development of the peony are what the ants are hungry for."

PEONY LORE

Most peonies that are available to the gardening public are hybrids of the two major peony classes—herbaceous and tree.

Just about all of the herbaceous peonies can be traced back to the Chinese species, *Paeonia lactiflora*. Reaching 2 to 3 feet in height, its leaves are a striking, shiny dark green. Adding interest to the autumn garden, the foliage turns a lovely red with the drop in air temperature.

P. lactiflora blooms in late spring, usually producing flowers that are 3 to 6 inches across and have a wonderful fragrance. The blossoms come in single and double form as well as "anemone" form. These have broad outer petals with smaller petals at their center. Herbaceous peonies require a period of dormancy to produce blooms worthy of mention.

Tree peonies descend from *Paeonia suffruticosa*, a Chinese shrub. Somewhat woody, yet deciduous in nature, tree peonies can reach 6 feet in height. Just like their herbaceous counterparts, tree peonies are long lived, but don't take well to being moved. And with blossoms of varied sizes and colors, they bloom in early to mid spring, when azaleas are also showing their colors.

Tree peonies require little attention and grow in many different soil types, so long as it is well drained and gets a decent amount of sunlight. This makes it a very suitable shrub for coastal gardens that have a little protection from the elements. They also thrive in containers. "If you have space limitations, you should consider growing tree peonies in breathable pots that have a fast draining potting mix," says Michel Hsu. He has kept peonies in containers for as long as five years before moving them out to the garden. Good drainage and airflow in and around the pot are two keys to successfully growing peonies in containers.

Summing up, David Maher says, "There's no reason why tree peonies shouldn't be a part of every American garden. They ask for so little, yet offer so much in return, year after year."

The fruits of Michael Hsu's labors can be viewed at Booth #211 in the Philadelphia Flower Show's "Marketplace," where he will have several varieties on display. He also opens PeonyLand (475 Church Road, Richlandtown, PA 18955, 215-536-9388) to the public in the spring when all of his tree peonies are in bloom. For more information, visit *www.peonyland.com*



A Peony Paradise

Go peony crazy at **Cricket Hill Garden's** Peony Festival, which is held every year from mid-May through early June in Thomaston, Connecticut. Growers of both tree and herbaceous peonies, owners Kasha and Dave Furman make frequent trips to China in search of new and better varieties. Visits to their farm are accepted Thursdays through Sundays during the festival, including Memorial Day weekend. Call (860) 283-1042 for bloom updates or visit their highly informative website at *www.treepeony.com*.



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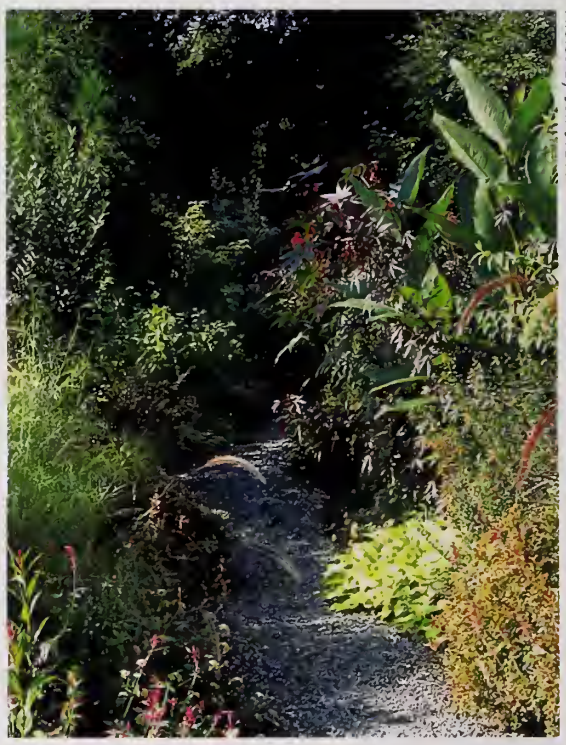
Those Awkward Side Yards

by Jeff Jabco

On suburban properties, many times the small, awkward spaces that remain after the house is plunked down on the middle of the lot remain just that—small and awkward. But with careful planning, these "forgotten" spaces can be some of the most exciting, creative areas.

Andrew Bunting, a horticultural professional and curator at the Scott Arboretum, lives in a stone, two-story Cape Cod-inspired home on just over one-fourth of an acre in Swarthmore, Pennsylvania. Andrew purchased the 1950 house just over three years ago and started immediately on new landscaping: a plant-filled cottage garden in the front and, in the rear, a flagstone patio, mixed woody and herbaceous long border, tropical border, water garden and an enclosed vegetable plot. Caroline Eells, a friend of Andrew's, helps with garden maintenance. A side garden makes exceptional use of space. Both side areas are just 15 feet wide, and, while one is occupied with the driveway, air conditioning unit, gas meter and a narrow foundation planting, the south side has become a very inviting garden.

Rather than settling for turf and a foundation planting, Andrew wanted this south-facing area to be a lush, colorful passageway that would be attractive from the two living room windows and one upstairs bedroom window. At the same time he thought it would be nice to have a bit of screening from the neighbor's side yard without resorting to a fence or hedge.



Photos by Jeff Jobco

His solution was to construct a 3-foot-wide gravel path running down the middle of the side yard that connects the front porch to the lawn in the rear garden (see right). The concept of *mass* is a major design element here, and it gives a lush feeling to this narrow space. When walking through, one gets the sense of a much larger garden, because of the diversity of the plantings and the exuberance of the plants spilling over the path, self-sowing along the edges and weaving through each other.

A skilled plantsman, Andrew wanted to grow a diversity of unusual tropicals and tender perennials with both a Mediterranean feel and strong summer color. Flowers or foliage of red, orange and pink can be found in the *Coleus* 'Alabama Sunset', cuphea, delosperma, callirhoe, celosia, pelargonium and agastache. He also chose woody plants with strong autumn interest, such as *Disanthus cercidifolius*, *Ilex* 'Sparkleberry', *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Edith Bogue', *Aronia arbutifolia* 'Brilliantissima' (the latter three all PHS Gold Medal plants).

To push the limit in his warm Zone 6/cool Zone 7 garden, Andrew planted crinums and *Amaryllis belladonna*. On trellises and covering the south wall of the house are vines and espaliers such as climbing roses, *Clematis viticella*, *Parthenocissus henryana*, *Bignonia capreolata* 'Tangerine Beauty' and *Magnolia virginiana* 'Henry Hicks'.

How will the garden change? Andrew realizes that as some woody plants mature, they will have to be moved to other locations so that he can maintain this sunny, warm, comfortable passageway and even squeeze in a few more new choice plants. But for the moment, it's a sideyard to simply revel in.





Jeff Jabco is the director of grounds and coordinator of horticulture at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.



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Crazy for Caudiciforms

GARDENING INDOORS

by Ilene Sternberg

I stumbled into a beehive during an October meeting of the Philadelphia Cactus & Succulent Society—a pulsating, zealous group of plant-obsessed people buzzing around a hot, packed room in the Horticulture Center in Fairmount Park.

When they took their seats, the gathering took on the aura of an AA meeting. Newcomers stood to introduce themselves and confess their addictions: "My name is Janet. I'm a cactus nut." "Hi, I'm Bill and I collect succulents. I'm running out of space in my home, but I can't stop. I need help." "My name is Ilene. I want to know how to get these needles out of my fingers."

Actually, I'd come to meet Dr. Gerald Barad, an icon of the group (also profiled on page 16 of this issue). Earlier, I'd been introduced to a weird and wonderful array of succulents on a visit to the greenhouse at Meadowbrook Farm, where manager John Story led an illuminating tour. (A bit too inspiring, I'm afraid. The tour resulted in my spending $275 in take-home lessons.) Mostly, I wanted to learn about "caudiciforms" and "pachycauls," the so-called "fat plants" that are now *the* hot tickets among collectors, and both Story and Barad were rumored to be caught in the caudiciform web.

Fat plants, succulents from at least 37 plant families, all share the same trait: a swollen stem, the water storage unit for the plant. (Most succulents store water in their leaves.) A representative caudiciform is *Dioscorea elephantipes*, the elephant's foot or turtleback plant, with a tough armored caudex that protects the plant from desiccation over long periods, while the fast-growing ephemeral greenery manufactures food and bears flowers. Another noteworthy member of that genus is *Dioscorea sylvatica* (pictured right). Here is one grown by Ray Rogers and regularly entered at the Philadelphia Flower Show.



Rob Cordillo

Common examples of pachycauls—which fall somewhere between caudiciforms and true stem succulents such as cacti—are the ponytail palm (*Beaucarnea recurvata*) or the desert rose (*Adenium obesum*).

Some more exotic fat plants can be described as "architectural," or "sculptural," euphemisms for "bizarre" or "grotesque." These are plants only a collector could love. These are not your granny's African violets. Though many appear to come from outer space, they typically hail from inhospitable hot, semi-arid or parched world climes, and flourish in a dry house or apartment with 2 to 3 hours of sun, well-draining soil, and infrequent drenching, like a flash-flood in the desert.

Normally slow-growing, they can live hundreds of years. In the wild, caudiciform trees—baobabs (*Adansonia digitata*), for instance—can live to be thousands of years old. Consequently, many fat plants make excellent bonsai subjects, trainable with the help of wire, but rarely needing moisture or trimming.

For more information on the subject, Dr. Barad referred me to the fat-plant bible: *Caudiciform & Pachycaul Succulents: Pachycauls, Bottle-, Barrel- and Elephant-Trees and Their Kin: a Collector's Miscellany* by Gordon Rowley (Strawberry Press, $85). You can find this book in PHS's McLean Library.

To see caudiciforms locally, you can visit Meadowbrook Farm. And, of course, check out fat plants at the Flower Show this year. And be sure to say "caudiciform" and "pachycaul" aloud. You're sure to impress anyone within earshot.



Ilene Sternberg is an award-winning freelance writer who pens a gardening column for *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware.

RESOURCES

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Shrubs in the Home Landscape

A Winter Stroll

by Bill Thomas

Winter is the only season that cuts gardeners a break. It is the closest we come to relaxation. There is still lots to be done, with cleanup and pruning, but nothing has to be done today. The problem is, we want our leisure and color too. Thank goodness there are plants that provide just that in the middle of winter.

For mid-winter flowers, you cannot beat a camellia. These are the quintessential winter flowers, but for years they have been beyond our reach. Today, fortunately, several cultivars tolerate our Zone 6 winters outside of Philadelphia. *Camellia japonica* 'Korean Fire' (a PHS Gold Medal winner) has single red flowers with golden yellow centers. The flowers bloom throughout much of the winter, sometimes opening as early as November and continuing through March. The buds open sporadically during warm spells, greeting us on our winter garden walks.

This camellia originated on an island on the northwestern coast of South Korea. It reaches 6 to 8 feet tall and 4 to 5 feet wide. The broad evergreen leaves—intensely dark green and shiny—are as beautiful as the flowers. Site the plant out of the winter wind, ideally in light shade, with excellent soil drainage. Surround it with an ephemeral ground cover of winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) mixed with the hardy *Arum italicum* for a true celebration of the season. *[For more on hardy camellias, see the article in the October 2000 issue.]*

The camellia, alas, has no scent, but fortunately, the winter-blooming honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*) has one of the most beautiful fragrances around. Its small white flowers have a sweet, citrus odor and, on a warm, sunny day in February and March, the scent reaches out to you (on other days, stick your nose in a flower).

This honeysuckle is a big shrub, growing 8 to 10 feet tall and 4 to 6 feet wide. It grows vigorously, and pruning it to the base will keep it in bounds. Prune it in bloom to enjoy flowers indoors. This tough plant tolerates sun or shade and any soil but a poorly drained one. You'll get the best blooms by placing it in a sunny spot. I've underplanted mine with purple shades of Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis* and hybrids). The dark hellebore foliage and flowers lend contrast to the pale honeysuckle.

One of the smallest of the winter blooming shrubs is winter daphne, also known as *Daphne odora* (great name, no? I adore *odora*). My personal favorite is the white-flowered cultivar, 'Alba', but the species itself is pretty too, with pink flowers. This shrub reaches 3 feet tall and wide and absolutely requires winter shade and protection from winds. Though technically a Zone 7 plant, with extra care we can convince it to grow here. I've sited mine on the south side of a stone wall, under a thickly branched ginkgo tree. It rarely feels the wind and the light shade works well for it. I like European ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) surrounding it, amidst a few bricks to stand on while sniffing.

Plant these winter bloomers near a walkway so you can enjoy them on your hibernal strolls. The shrubs don't have to be near the house, in fact the further from the house the better. They'll draw you into the garden in winter, which just may become your favorite season.



Photos by Bill Thomas



Above: *Eranthis hyemalis*

Left: *Arum italicum*

Below: *Lonicera fragrantissima* at the Morris Arboretum



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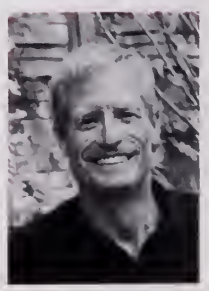
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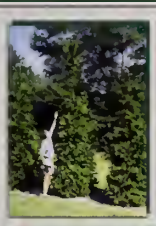
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It all started with the Harvest Show. Beverly and Delmer Gill, lifelong plant lovers and long-time members of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, decided to toss their hats into the ring and compete in the Harvest Tables category. For Delmer, it was a natural extension of his professional life in the food-service industry, where he discovered a knack for creating artful food presentations and floral arrangements. (A veteran of Frog Commissary and the Franklin Institute, he recently started a new job as café manager at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.)

The Gills' first foray into the Flower Show came about three years ago. Delmer became fascinated with pressed plants and entered that category. The next year, he tried his hand at a medium niche arrangement. "I was happy with that and decided to stick with it for a while," he says.

The couple makes a good team. "Beverly loves to grow the plants, and I like to make something out of them," notes Delmer. Beverly recently completed the Penn State Master Gardeners program and has also studied horticulture at Temple University. When it comes to planning exhibits, they like to start by visualizing and tossing out ideas. "We pour everything in a bag, shake it up, and see what comes out," says Delmer. "Sometimes I get carried away, but Beverly gives me a kick and brings me back to earth."

Although their efforts have earned them several ribbons, Delmer insists that the real thrill is just being part of the Show, especially after attending for so many years as a visitor. "Anything beyond that is just icing on the cake. All I'm really looking for is that 'P' (for passing)."

Delmer and Beverly live in Germantown, near the Awbury Arboretum, where they are part of an active community garden and serve on the board of the Awbury Arboretum Garden Club. From there, they became involved with Philadelphia Green, and now, they both sit on the Advisory Board. Beverly has served as the Board's chair for the past two years. "With Philadelphia Green, one thing led to another and another," Delmer reflects. "It's been a good experience for us. It seems like they're always thanking us for something, and we're always thanking them." The Gills also volunteer at both the Harvest Show and the Flower Show, where they usually staff the Philadelphia Green exhibit or help out at the horticultural information booth.

Each year, Beverly and Delmer start to "bang the drum" to encourage their fellow community gardeners to enter the Harvest Show or the Flower Show; they would like to see more African-American gardeners get involved in exhibiting. "I tell people how much fun it is and that the support you get as an exhibitor is just amazing. The advisors and chairs (and even the other competitors) are so helpful," he says. Thanks to Beverly and Delmer's cajoling, some fellow Awbury gardeners have started competing, and the Arboretum is working on designs for a garden setting or balcony display, possibly for 2004.

For this year's Flower Show, Delmer and Beverly plan to compete in two categories: the medium niche challenge class (flowers are provided; competitors just bring a pair of clippers and get to work) and the medium niche novice class. "Sometimes it's a matter of trial and error and guesswork," Delmer observes. "But we're always learning something. As long as I'm on this earth, I'll keep learning."

—Jane Carroll



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Cover photo by Walter Chandoha

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HOW TO...

One of the perks of being the editor of a gardening magazine is commissioning articles that provide useful tips for, well....*me*. Certainly, it's my duty to bear in mind the horticultural requests of our readers. On occasion, however, I scratch my head over a personal gardening conundrum and find myself thinking, "*Hmmm*, this would make a good article."

This issue of *Green Scene* is full of these kinds of "how to" stories, some of which, I must admit, stem from self-serving gardening desires. The one that springs to mind is Ellen Zachos' piece on how to get orchids to re-bloom. It's a question I've heard time and time again from plant enthusiasts and, this year, it became especially relevant to me when I bought my first orchid. Enchanted by its deep, plum-purple blossoms, I nabbed a *Dendrobium* 'Salaya Minist' at a local nursery for a lofty $6.95. I proudly displayed it in my living room for two weeks before half its lovely blossoms fell off, dry and desiccated. Suddenly, I remembered why I had been reluctant to buy a "temperamental orchid" for so long.

So I called orchid authority Ellen Zachos for help (another shameless perk of being the editor—I can just pick up the phone and call the experts for advice. Fortunately, PHS members can do this, too, by consulting our popular "Ask a Gardener" hotline. Look for contact information in the masthead on page 5). Ellen and I proceeded to discuss the problem and decided that this would make a great story for the orchid novice, showing not only how to get your orchid to thrive, but also to bloom seasonally for years to come.

While waiting for the article to show up on my desk, I ran down to PHS's McLean Library to look up emergency medical care for Dendrobiums. After thumbing through a few books, it didn't take long to realize that I had placed it too close to the heating vents, far too dry a spot for this transplanted tropical. The solution? I relocated it to the bathroom, where it laps up warm humidity from the shower and is currently showing improvement. Next, I'm going to follow the care tips outlined in Ellen's article, and am anticipating a stunning burst of flowers late next fall. If you're similarly new to orchids, I think you're going to find her advice as useful as I have.

The rest of this issue is packed with more instructional stories. PHS president Jane Pepper jumps into the fray with a subject she's familiar with—*peppers*. Jane recently traveled to Cross Country Nurseries, a specialty grower in New Jersey where she learned about the whopping 440 varieties of peppers they sell, not to mention all the physical work this endeavor requires. It's quite impressive.

Another article broaches that most romantic of outdoor subjects, the garden path. Even if you don't have one, you probably *want* one. Still, there are lots of decisions to make, as well as a variety of materials to choose from. Do you want flagstone or natural rocks, gravel or commercial pavers, or simply a trail of well-mowed grass? There are many points to ponder and this story is a good primer.

On the environmental front, we all are becoming increasingly earth-conscious in the 21st century and are looking for new ways to recycle. What better place to start than in our gardens? In garden veteran Walt Chandoha's creative piece, you'll learn how to recycle everything from coat hangers to plastic containers to...a golf bag. (We'll let Walt explain that one.)



Pete Prown

Finally, what better "how to" lesson can we learn than how to revitalize our urban spaces? On the back page, we'll take a glimpse at our Philadelphia Green program's ongoing work in the city, where trash-strewn lots are being replaced with nicely maintained stretches of grass, trees and attractive fencing. These areas then can become centers for community activity, rather than sad reminders of loss and decay. More than anything, the work of Philadelphia Green shows us "how to" take pride in our cities, and illuminates a path towards larger-scale urban revitalization in the future.

Pete Prown

email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*



Pete Prown

The Honest Pleasure of Lunaria

Walk down Susan Kline's Delaware County lane on a May morning and prepare to be bowled over by her...honesty. Not hers personally, but by the huge drifts of *Lunaria annua*—commonly known as "honesty"—that festoon her front lawn.

The *Lunaria* was planted in the Kline garden several years ago, along with an array of yellow and red tulips. Susan was also planning to put in purple tulips, but realized that the soft violet of this biennial *was* her tulip. "Its flower did the job of providing purple in my spring garden. Along with the tulips, it floats over the green foliage like a cloud passing over the garden."

Noting that she likes a "loose, lazy garden," Susan's choice of *Lunaria* seems a twist of fate since, as she notes, "if you let it go, it self-sows to eternity." It's recommended, however, that you thin it out after the spring bloom so it doesn't crowd out other garden specimens—leave the remaining plants about 1 foot apart. A little *Lunaria* goes a long way.

Flower arrangers also like this plant in late summer, as its seed pods grow into flat, circular "coins," hence its other common names: money plant and silver dollars. As the plants dry out in fall, its pods become covered in a membrane that must be removed to reveal the decorative pods within.

Although the genus is small (only three species), there are several cultivars worth searching out at local nurseries. While the species *L. annua* has light purple flowers on green foliage, 'Stella' features white blossoms and 'Munstead Purple' has dazzling red-purple ones. For summer-long appeal, look for 'Variegata' or 'Alba Variegata', both of which sport cream or white margins on their green leaves.

Back in Susan Kline's garden on this May morning, the *Lunaria* is blooming up a storm amidst tulips, azaleas, dogwoods and buttercups. Highlighted against the stucco façade of her Arts & Crafts-era cottage, the freewheeling effect is pure bliss.

"Each spring, I'll do a major weeding and mulching," she adds, "But other than that, I don't manipulate the plants much. I'm more interested in watching the garden form itself." And for this kind of a "loose, lazy garden," few plants are better suited than *Lunaria.*

— *Carol DeGiulio*

Deer Me!

In response to your article in the October, 2002 issue ("Oh, Deer," p. 46), I just want to say that I love my deer! Every time I see them, my world stops for a few moments as I ponder the bigger picture and admire their grace. They are welcome to pass through the front yard of our half-acre suburban home. (They are fenced out of the backyard—good fences do make good neighbors.)

Our property was on the PHS garden tour several years ago. It is a virtual mini-arboretum of unusual specimen plants collected by my late mother, who also appreciated deer and planted accordingly. It would be devastating to us to lose any one of these plants.

Between five and eight deer come through our property twice daily and they do remarkably little damage. They do occasionally prune the azaleas, but we still get great blooms. As creatures of habit, they have their paths and do not forage into the hydrangeas or hostas planted out of their way. Best of all, they eat the acorns each fall.

While I'm aware that many people have a different experience, I can testify that it is possible to have both deer and a glorious, blooming, healthy landscape. It takes planning, patience, and the right plants. There are over 200 varieties of plants—woodies, perennials, bulbs—that co-exist harmoniously with deer in our front yard. (Ed. note: you can find several books on this subject in PHS's McLean Library, as well as on websites like www.deerx-landscape.com.)

So I say to the nay-sayers: Do some research and live in peace with wildlife.

Lis Braun
via the Internet

Asian Longhorned Beetle

It Can Happen Here

By Judy Antipin

Since 1996, communities in and around New York, Chicago, and Jersey City, NJ have lost thousands of trees due to infestations of the Asian Longhorned Beetle. This invasive pest is thought to have come to the United States in packing materials from China sometime in the last 10 years. In the battle to detect and eradicate this dangerous tree pest, our first line of defense is professional arborists, landscapers, landowners and interested citizens who have regular contact with trees.

Its scientific name is *Anoplophora glabripennis (Motschulsky)*, but on the North American continent it is known as the Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB). It's easy to see where the name comes from—the beetle has outsized antennae that resemble the shape of the horns on longhorned cattle *(above right)*.

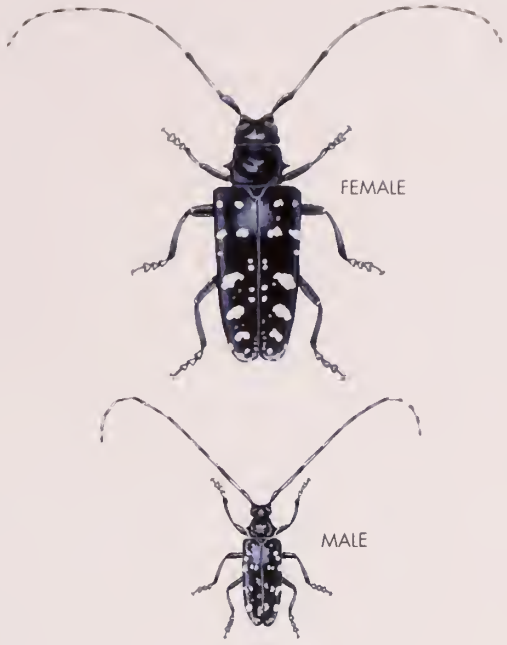
The ALB attacks primarily the trunks and branches of healthy and weakened hardwood trees. Most of the damage occurs in two ways: when larvae tunnel their way to the heartwood in the central part of the tree, where they feed; and when the much larger adults tunnel out, leaving perfectly round and quite visible exit holes 3/8 to 1/2-inch in diameter *(right)*.



EXIT HOLES

In the United States, adults generally emerge from host trees between late June and the first hard frost. Their main hosts have been members of the maple family, followed by elm, birch, willow and poplar. In the urban and suburban communities where the beetle has appeared, tree loss was high, creating a decline in the aesthetic and environmental benefits offered by mature trees. Subsequently, tree replacement planting efforts have focused on ALB-resistant species, but these young trees will take many years to mature.

To prevent the spread of the Asian Longhorned Beetle, early detection is critical, and combating this pest requires drastic measures. The first evidence of the ALB in the U.S. was discovered in Brooklyn in 1996, then Chicago in 1998, and Jersey City in 2002. Infested trees were removed, chipped and burned, and quarantines were issued on the removal of tree wood from infested sites to other areas. There is a multi-year plan for eradication of ALB from these existing sites.



Mature ALBs take about a year to develop after a female beetle first deposits her eggs in small depressions (one egg in each) that she hollows out in the bark of a tree. Each female may lay 30 to 200 eggs. Large amounts of a sawdust-like substance may be found on the ground near tree trunks, or in the crotches of branches. The emerging adults leave larger rounded exit holes. The adults are large, glossy and black (3/4 to 1-1/4 inches), with irregular white spots on their wing covers. The long, curved antennae are striped white and black.

Anyone who spots evidence of possible ALB infestation, or infestation by other exotic tree pests, should call an appropriate resource listed below to report their findings. The best tool in the constant battle to protect the health of our invaluable trees and forests is to monitor the condition of the tree stock and to spot any emerging problems early on.

Judy Antipin is with the USDA Forest Service, Northeastern Area, Forest Health Protection.

REPORTING RESOURCES

State Department of Agriculture
717-772-5228

USDA APHIS Plant Protection and Quarantine
215-597-4515, ext. 0

For more information on the Asian Longhorned Beetle, visit *www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/alb/* or *www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/alb/alb.html*

Jane Pepper...



on Peppers

The small town of Rosemont, New Jersey isn't exactly the place where I thought I would find "The World's Largest Selection of Chile & Sweet Pepper Plants." But sure enough, after a trip through Lambertville—and a detour when I got confused on Route 519—I found Cross Country Nurseries, its owner Janie Lamson and hundreds of pepper plants. And this was late September. If I had gone in spring, I would have found *thousands.*





Story by Jane Pepper
Garden Photography by Walter Chandoha

Janie studied enough architecture in college to figure out how to design the house of her mother's dreams on a piece of land her family bought in Rosemont in 1985. Figuring she wanted to build a business on the land beside the house, Janie started to grow perennials, eventually offering more than 750 varieties, including ferns and ornamental grasses. In 1993, her brother gave her six packets of pepper seeds, from which she grew some good-looking plants that summer.

The following March, she and her mother were intrigued by the *Organic Gardening* display, "Visit the Islands ... In Your Own Back Yard," at the Philadelphia Flower Show, featuring chile peppers and toads. As they waited to enter the exhibit, visitors were talking about how they loved peppers, but didn't know where to find plants of unusual varieties to grow at home. That year, Janie and her husband Fernando Villegas offered several varieties along with the perennials. In 1997, in response to calls from across the country, they started to ship pepper plants, and last year, in



Potted pepper plants ready to ship.

response to more demand, they also shipped tomato plants.

I didn't meet Fernando, but clearly he's a man of many talents, including devising the shipping containers for these little plants. In January, he and Janie sow thousands of seeds under lights in their basement. Before the 2002 shipping season ended (it lasts from the first week of April through June), they had shipped 60,000 to 70,000. Their catalog and website listed 440 varieties last year; this year, they plan to offer a bewildering 500 varieties for sale.

The earliest shipments of Fernando's little brown boxes are filled with hot peppers for gardeners in states such as Texas and California. Later in the season, the shipments are headed for gardens on the east coast, where the owners' taste buds are sometimes not as daring and gardeners are looking for colorful sweet peppers.

After the pepper seeds have germinated in the cellar, they are potted into 2-inch pots and moved into one of 11 hoop greenhouses. Janie and Fernando grow organically, using seaweed and other organic products for fertilizer and beneficial insects to control pests. Occasionally, if a crisis occurs and, for example, a shipment of insects doesn't arrive on time, they will use insecticidal soap. Each greenhouse has two sets of doors, a "bug lock" as Jamie calls it, to keep Japanese beetles out of the growing areas. In each greenhouse you will also find a small pond, which helps to keep the humidity high enough to ward off infestations of spider mites.

Janie and Fernando call one of their greenhouses the "Mother House," because it's home to the plants from which they save seed for future years. "I can buy seed from commercial seed houses and from places like the Seed Savers Exchange," Janie says, "but sometimes a variety just disappears from the market. By saving my own seed, I am assured of a crop, and besides, my own seed is fresher and I get much better germination." Now that she's well known for her large selection of peppers, pepper lovers across the country ship seed to her to add to her collection.

The pace in springtime at Cross Country Nurseries must be frantic.

On Sunday, they pack to start shipping to the west and other distant parts of the country on Monday, using a three-day service. By Tuesday, they are shipping to the middle of the country and on Wednesday, they service customers in states such as New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. Peppers are apparently tough plants. On average, Cross Country Nurseries only loses three plants per thousand in shipping.

Cross Country is also open for retail business, starting in late April through June. Janie firmly believes that she has the best success when she holds off until early June to plant peppers in her cold New Jersey garden. Yet some customers believe equally firmly that they want to get the plants in earlier, so she reluctantly moved up the opening of her retail business from mid-May to late April. "If we have a period of cold weather after you plant," she says, "the peppers may get hit by frost. And, even if they are not nipped, they suffer enough that they never recover and will sit and sulk for the rest of the summer. So it's a bit of a gamble to put them in too early."

One customer's teasing led Janie and Fernando to develop another side of the pepper business—fresh chiles in late summer. "You have," this customer said to her, "so many varieties in your catalog and I can only try planting a few in my garden each year. I wish you would figure out how to allow customers to taste several varieties so we can figure out what we really want to grow." A light bulb went on in Janie's head and by the next season she had developed several rows of chiles for harvesting fresh and for sale through mail order. Last year, she figures she





Above: The yellow peppers on top are 'Wild Brazil', the purple ones across the middle are 'Brazilian Rainbow' and the red and green ones along with the white flowers at the bottom are 'Thai Hot Ornamental'.

Right: 'Peruvian Purple'



Janie and husband Fernando.

shipped more than 1,000 pounds (not bad for a two-year-old business).

The color in the pepper rows in late September was wonderful, ranging from deep purple to bright red and wonderful shades of orange. Most of the plants were stocky and compact, with healthy bright green leaves. A couple had lost their leaves, courtesy of the tomato hornworm. Given that the Soil Conservation Service told Janie that she has "the worst soil in New Jersey," she grows all her peppers in raised beds, filled with compost and seaweed. Their challenge now is to figure out how avoid a build-up of disease in the raised beds by planting year after year in the same soil. Some gardeners rotate between say, crops of beans and solanaceous crops, such as peppers and tomatoes.

Jamie and Fernando, however, are going to take another approach. Come early spring, they plan to use their front-end loader to scoop up the soil from the raised beds, which are in two distinct areas, mix it all with additional soil and spread it out again.

Janie enjoyed her years as a perennial grower, but she really loves to grow peppers. "Peppers," she says "have enormous energy and whenever I come out and look at them growing, I get a boost." Given that she and Fernando work 16 hours a day, seven days a week for almost 10 months of the year on the pepper farm and in a family electronic business in Rosemont, she definitely needs that boost.

Jane G. Pepper is president of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

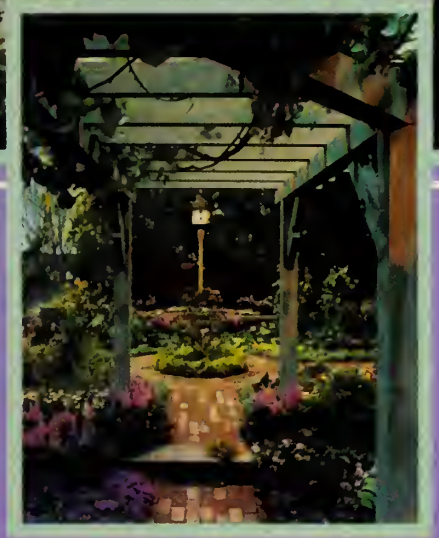


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Making Tracks

Chronicle of a Garden Path

Story by Olivia Lehman Photography by Rob Cardillo



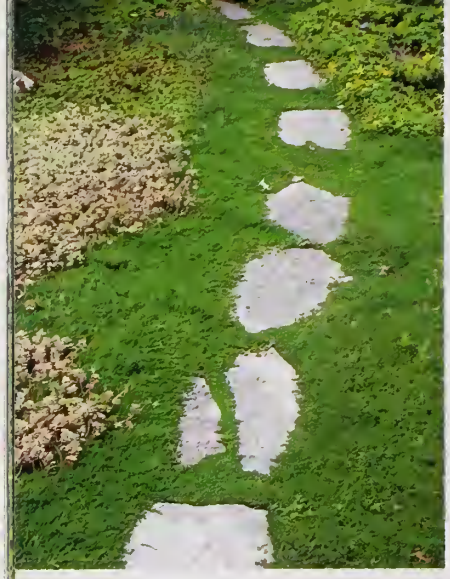
Violets fade, delphiniums vanish altogether, and, one afternoon, your youngest waves goodbye from the back of a Harley-Davidson. Now is the time to build a path—or at least finish the one started when the biker was only three. But let's face it, not everyone recognizes the importance of things like paths, and fences and walls and steps. We love peonies, right? Yet after the novice gardener's love affair with plants settles a little, she realizes that a garden needs more than fragrance and voluptuous color. Suddenly, rocks look pretty good, too.

Put enough rocks together and you've begun a kind of trailblazing, adding not just order, but mystery to the landscape. Beyond their standard and important use as "roadways" through the garden, complete with well-marked starting points and destinations, paths also serve as welcome distractions from the straight and narrow, drawing us to parts unknown. It is said that the most beautiful gardens never reveal their entirety when taken at a glance—rather, they invite exploration. Paths help fashion this allure.

When I first started clearing a path through my sloped front yard many years ago I was, as the mother of an infant, tired yet determined. With my young daughter momentarily asleep in the car, I'd park in the narrow driveway right next to the garden and get crackin'. Nap by nap, I managed to bisect that little hill, using railroad ties as a border and who-knows-what as stepping stones. The plot has gone through many incarnations since then, but when I resorted to blanketing my path in straw last year, frustrated by the challenges of more lasting materials, I knew the time had come

Above: Precise patterns add both delight and elegant formality (also, don't rule out hiring someone to build your hardscape for you).

Opposite page: Pure and simple (pale gray, irregular stones awash in thyme).



Making Tracks

Opposite page clockwise from top left:

Joe Henderson relaxes on the path he built for Chanticleer's water gardens.

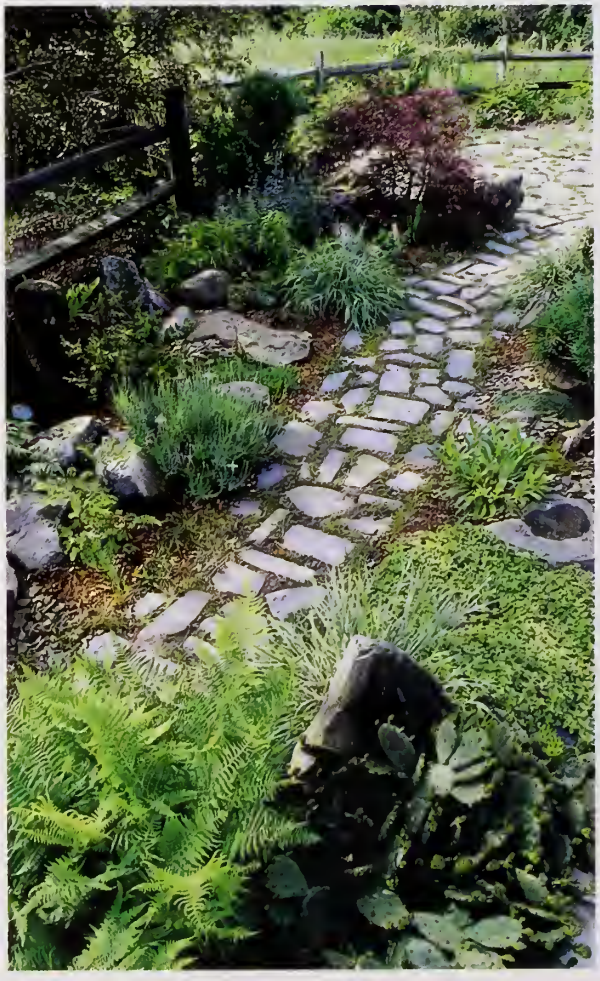
Ferns edge this mysterious bluestone walkway.

Pet headstone used as paver in a trail at Chanticleer.

to take a different, perhaps more scholarly approach.

I must confess that shortly before giving in to the straw I had already started conducting research, consulting the essays of Henry Mitchell, the late *Washington Post* columnist whose crotchety "Earthman" collections contain some of the most comprehensive and eccentric gardening advice in print. Mitchell's essays taught me that any decent path needs to be at least four feet wide, "otherwise the effect will be that of ribbon—insubstantial, stingy, restless, foolish." Not wanting to have anything stingy and foolish forever climbing toward my doorstep, I immediately widened my path with fine results.

Next, I began setting out the copper-hued mica schist I'd hauled away from Rock Hill Quarry in Bala Cynwyd, PA. Mine was a so called "crazy path", with stones packed together any which way. My kids liked the look, although in retrospect I probably found it to be a little less peaceful and cottagy than my dream path should be. I planted as much low growing thyme as I could afford between the stones and supposed I was on my way towards true pathdom. Actually, in my gut I knew I had not achieved permanence, or at least the impermanent permanence which is all any gardener can hope for. It had been too easy.



Left: An informal stream of stones adds whimsy to Chris Myers' garden, in Bedminster, PA.

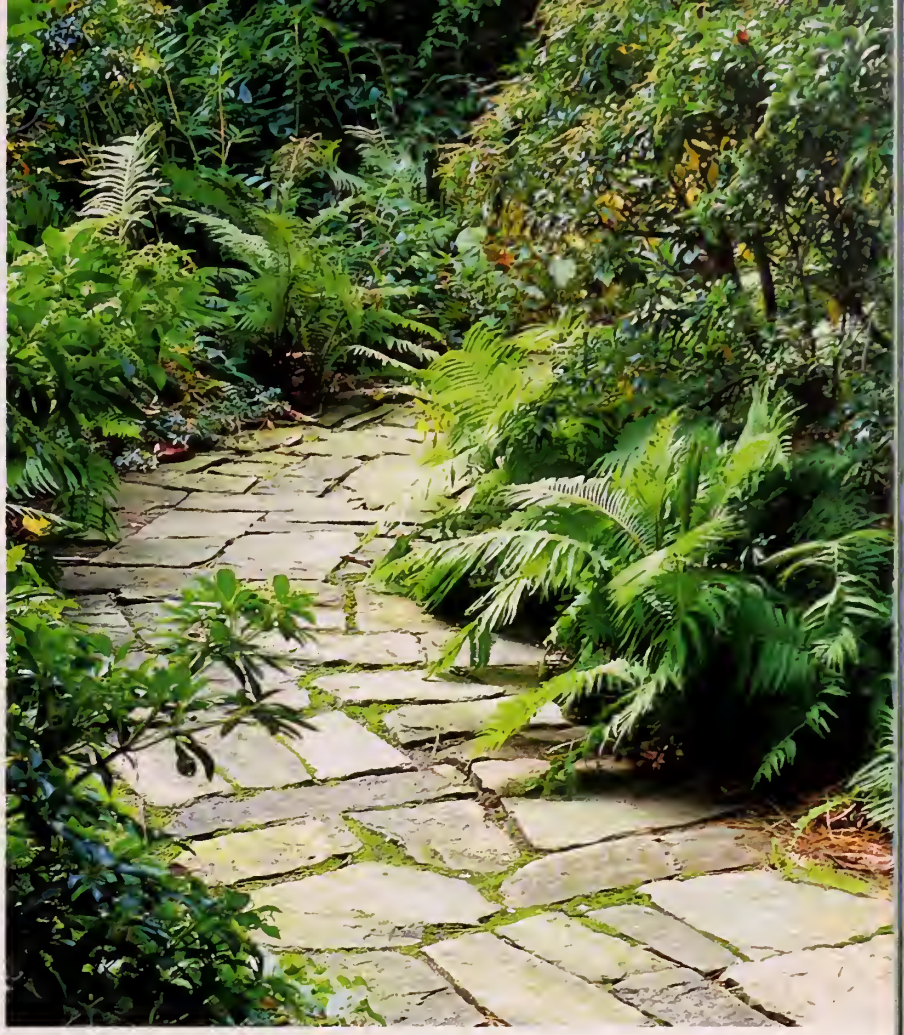
Naturally, all the rocks buckled and the expensive thyme disappeared, choked by bullies like purslane and crabgrass. Out came the stones, and a few days before we were to entertain a swarm of kids on the fourth of July, the straw appeared. "We'll pretend this is a farm!," I said to my family, knowing full well I was too lazy to work on a farm and that I had some more thinking to do about this whole path problem.

One thought I had was to forget about the stones altogether and cultivate a path made up entirely of the expensive low-growing thyme. It would be really green, like Ireland, and I'd beat the cost by starting everything from seed. Further research nixed that plan—herbaceous paths suit low traffic areas or meticulously tended gardens.....But clearly the straw had to go, since after a glorious first week or two the yellow, homely stuff stopped emitting fresh aromas and a sense of pastoral romance, and instead fell upon hard times—weedy, dilapidated, and spent.

Well, eventually I met the boyishly handsome and funny Joe Henderson, a plantsman who works at Chanticleer in Wayne, PA. As creator of the recently constructed flagstone walkway encircling Chanticleer's stunning water gardens, he was just the right person to, if you will, "set me on the right path." Joe told me to look at photos from garden magazines to get the project going. "But don't feel you need to duplicate them slavishly. Photos of other people's garden paths are like a launching pad," he noted. "What makes gardens unique is that we each have our own personal interpretations."

Joe followed his own advice at Chanticleer by sculpting a trail that is both sturdy and original. Under the partial influence of Japanese garden design, he chose to mix formal and informal elements in his






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Making Tracks

path, intermingling smooth cut flagstone with the occasional boulder or rough cut stone.

Let's not forget mechanics. After speaking with Joe I learned that what really stood between me and a nice firm walkway was about a half ton of crushed limestone. Hard and fast rule: No solid path of any worth can properly do its job without an underpinning of at least one foot of crushed rock. And you'll need to lay about an inch of screenings or sand on top of the little rocks. The inclusion of these layers will help prevent buckling and weed growth. Also by Joe's example, I discovered that establishing a pattern for your bricks or stones or slabs of wood can add pleasure to path building. The pinwheel design he chose for Chanticleer's water gardens inspired me to go home and make new sense of my mica schist. Today, instead of running amuck, stones run in quasi-straight lines, lending a more serene air to the garden.

Of course I haven't completed the little roadway yet, though I think I know where I'm going, and dream of the comforts this future path will afford. A beacon in winter, a place to do some skipping in the spring, a friend to much discovery and fun, my path will persevere like the truest of the true. Now I just need to figure out how to build a darn step....



A maze of stone paths at Fairmount Park's Japanese house. Stone slabs used as bridges lend a sculptural air.

Paths to Enlightenment

- **EVERY GARDEN NEEDS A PATH,** however humble the garden, or the trail. Paths act as anchors, making gardens look complete and enhancing the beauty of flowers. Think of white allysum flowing over red brick.

- **IT'S FUN TO LOOK** at paths in books, magazines, public gardens and other people's yards. I recommend *The Garden Design Book* by Cheryl Merser, *Paths and Walkways* by Daria Price Bowman, and *Garden Structures* by Linda Joan Smith. (All of these books are available in the PHS McLean Library.)

- **SINCE USE DETERMINES DESIGN,** decide at the outset the kind of work your path will do. A walkway leading from street to front door should be at least four feet wide and made of durable materials like bricks, stones or wood. Informal paths can be narrow and made of modest materials such as mulch, sand, gravel, stepping stones or plain old dirt. There is a rule out there that says the closer to the house the more formal the path, the farther away from the house the plainer the path.

- **GARDEN WRITER LINDA JOAN SMITH** rightly states that "the best paths make themselves, or seem to." Remember her words as you start path building. Observe where paths have been forming on their own, and then set those natural roadways in stone. Smith also notes that while sometimes we make our beds first, and fashion paths around them, other times the paths "create" spaces in the garden, which provide us with new opportunities for planting.

- **MOST PATHS WANT TO HAVE DESTINATIONS.** Destinations can include: gorgeous trees, garden beds, benches, birdbaths, hideouts, trash cans, garages, herb gardens, fountains, front doors, back doors, statues, urns, gazebos, forts, tepees, treehouses....and any other neat thing you can think of.

- **AN HERB GARDEN** bordered on all sides by a path, formal or not, is an ancient and lovely thing.

- **SMALL GARDENS** can handle busy effects within their paths while larger gardens usually can't. Consider herringbone and basket weave patterns for the little space—gravel, cut stone, turf, decomposed granite, brick running bond pattern for the large ones.

- **STEPPING STONE PATHS AND GRASS PATHS ARE BEAUTIFUL,** serene and evocative of countrysides and all things sweet. Beware however that grass paths need lots of care.

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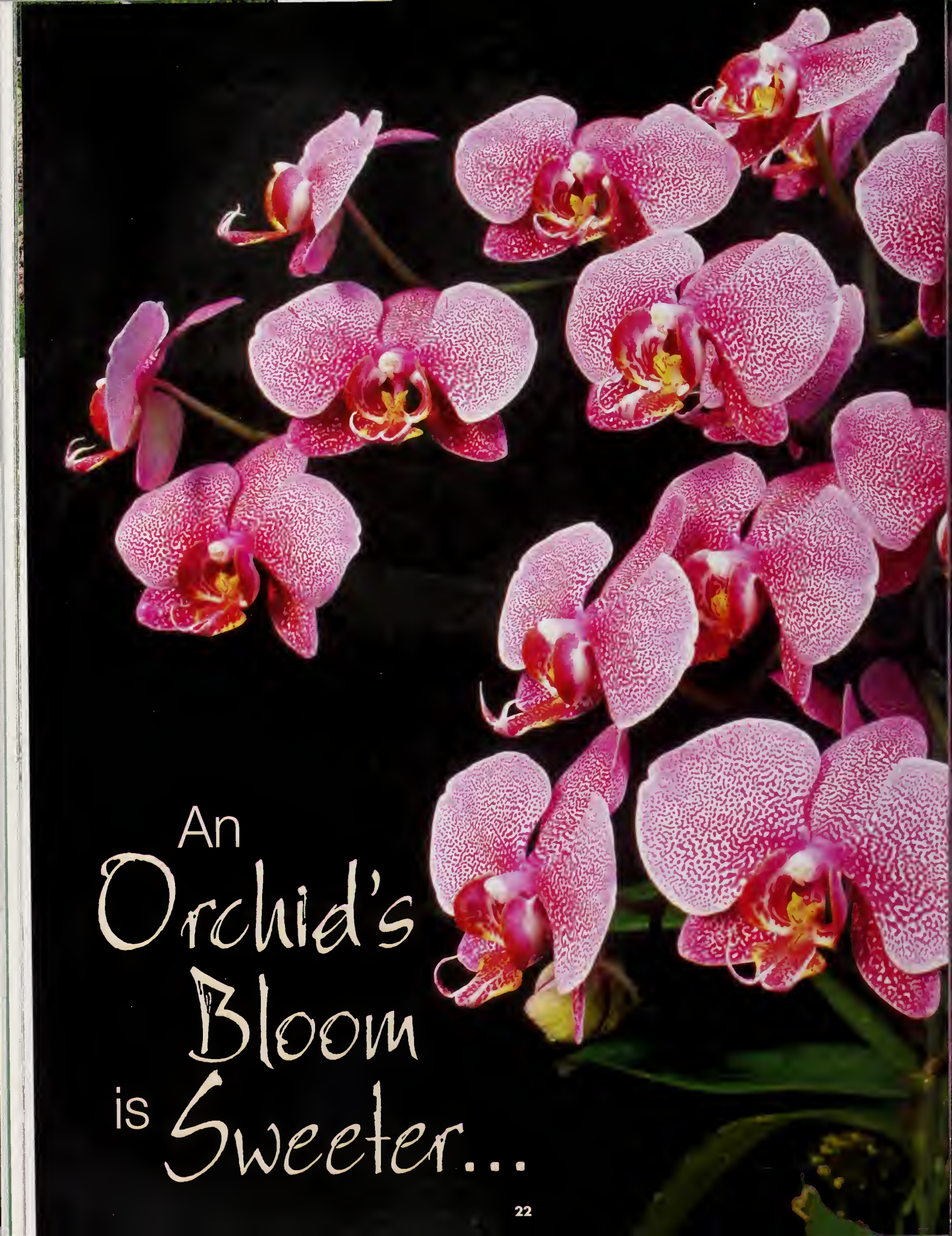


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An
Orchid's
Bloom
is Sweeter...

the Second Time Around

Story and photography
by Ellen Zachos



It's a classic story, as old as ornamental horticulture itself. Man sees orchid, man buys orchid, man doesn't know how to handle orchid, man gives up on orchid in frustration and vows never to fall for another pretty bloom. If this scenario sounds familiar, don't blame yourself for failing; you probably didn't have adequate information. (It's like planning a picnic without checking the weather first.) By following a few simple steps, you can almost guarantee your orchid will re-bloom.

Perhaps the best orchid for beginners is the *Phalaenopsis* [pronounced: fail-an-opp-sis]. It's also known as the "moth orchid" because of the shape of its flowers, which hover on long curved spikes. This is the easiest orchid for beginners to grow, and will reliably re-bloom year after year. There are hundreds of hybrids available, in colors ranging from pale yellow to bright magenta to white with dramatic purple splotches. In general, *Phalaenopsis* orchids bloom once a year. Between flowerings, they produce a few new leaves, which should be a medium-dark green. An eastern window is perfect for this orchid, which grows best in bright, indirect light.



Individual *Phalaenopsis* flowers can last for two to three months, depending on the temperature in your home; between 65°-70°F is ideal. Warmer temperatures cause the flowers to mature more quickly, while temperatures that are too low can cause flower buds to shrivel before opening. Flowers open from the bottom of the stem; as older flowers die, carefully remove them from the bloom stalk.

When all the flowers have wilted, try this trick for another round of bloom: cut the bloom spike just above its second node and wait a few weeks. There's a good chance (about 60%) that a second bloom stalk will grow from the node, producing another full cycle of bloom. If that doesn't happen, though, don't worry. Your Phal will be healthier and stronger if it gets some rest between flowerings.



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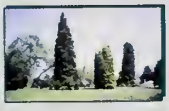
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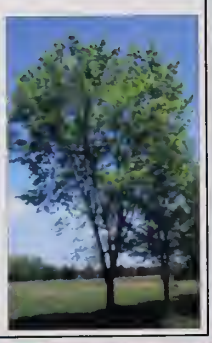
The above pictures were taken at the US Natianal Arboretum in Washingtan D.C. in August af 2001. When planted in the fall of 1998, they were 3 feet tall and planted an 6 1/2 faat centers. They grew 3 feet the first year (1999), and are naw 10 ta 12 feet tall. It can be trimmed ta any height ar width ta create the ultimate natural ar farmal hedge.

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Sometimes instead of another round of bloom, you'll get a baby orchid growing from the old flower spike. This is called a *keiki* (the Hawaiian word for "baby"). Leave it on the spike until it has produced a few roots, two inches long. Then, cut the flower spike just below and above the keiki, and pot up the baby orchid on its own.



How often should you water your Phal? That depends on several things: temperature, light, and the pot it's in, to name a few. In a clay pot, at normal household temperatures and in eastern light, your Phal will probably need water once a week.

Bring your orchid to the sink and soak it for 5 to 10 minutes in a bowl of water. Let it drain, then replace it where it grows. If the leaves look withered or limp, try watering every 5 or 6 days. If the bark mix feels constantly wet, water every 8 to 10 days. An orchid potted in plastic will dry out more slowly than one potted in clay.





After your Phal has finished blooming, feed it with a balanced fertilizer at half strength every other watering. Use a water soluble fertilizer, since time release granules can fall through a porous bark mixture. I mentioned earlier that Phals bloom once a year. When that time of year approaches (and it's up to you to keep track), start feeding your Phal with a bloom booster fertilizer, i.e., a food with a higher middle number. This indicates a higher concentration of phosphorous, which stimulates flowering.



If you have followed my directions to the letter, it won't be long before you see a purplish spike pushing its way upward out of the orchid's crown. It takes several weeks for the spike to fully elongate and form buds, so be patient. During this time it's especially important not to let the plant get too dry or too cold, or the buds will blast (i.e., dry up and wither).



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Ellen Zachos is the author of *Orchid Growing for Wimps*, published by Sterling Publishing Company. She is an instructor at the New York Botanical Garden and lectures around the world.

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The RECYCLED GARDEN

Story and Photographs by Walter Chandoha

These days, recycling is the norm rather than the exception. We recycle glass bottles and jars, aluminum and tin cans, newspapers and magazines, plastic bags and a myriad assortment of plastic containers, and lots of other useful stuff—junk, things, artifacts—that would otherwise go to landfills. Recycling conserves our dwindling resources. Sometimes it can be a time saver and maybe even save us a dollar or two. And I can't think of a better way to get free fertilizer than to recycle kitchen wastes, weeds, grass clippings, leaves and shredded paper in the compost pile.

Years ago, before recycling was in vogue and even mandatory in some areas, I was a recycler. Frankly, I wasn't thinking about recycling when I used waxed milk cartons and Styrofoam egg boxes to start seeds, or when I cut up strips of plastic bleach bottles for plant markers. It didn't even cross my mind as I wrapped plastic dry cleaner bags around wire fencing cylinders for mini hothouses. These objects were readily available and used in lieu of store-bought equivalents. Living out in the country six to eight miles from the nearest store, it was quicker to use stuff that was on hand than to drive into town to buy manufactured objects—and think of the savings in gas!

PLASTIC JUGS

So what can you recycle? Well, remember the magic word in *The Graduate*? Plastics! Now with its proliferation, we have to look



for more ways to keep it out of landfills and try to recycle at least some of it in the garden. Years ago, milk came in glass bottles that were returned to the grocer or the milkman. But the milkman's time passed, and the glass bottles were replaced by waxed cartons of all sizes. And though most of these are still around, the big one-gallon waxed carton has been replaced by the plastic jug.

Jugs are actually quite handy in the garden. In early spring and late fall, I use gallon-size milk and juice plastic jugs as mini-greenhouses by cutting off the bottoms and then covering the plants that need protection. Also, try placing a mini-greenhouse over a hill of newly planted seeds to speed germination—your garden will get a two-week head start over seeds exposed to the elements. To keep wind from blowing the jugs away, I unbend and straighten a wire coat hanger, cut it in half, make a small "U" at one end, and insert the wire into the jug with the "U" grasping the edge of the jug.

Are you in need of plant labels for your garden? Try reusing plastic bleach jugs. First, be sure to thoroughly rinse out the jugs. I cut off the top and bottom to get a cylinder about six inches high, then cut this into strips of varying widths; a point is made at one end where it will go into the soil.

Similarly, you can use labels made from detergent jugs with their varying colors (like red, blue, yellow, and green) to mark the location and color of spring flowering bulbs and perennials. Growing white flowers? Use white labels made from those bleach jugs.

More Recycling Possibilities

- Plastic take-out containers, egg boxes, Styrofoam, and coffee cups for seed starting. ➡
- House cleaner pump-spray bottles for misting plants.
- Colorful lithographed tin cans as cache pots.
- Panty hose to hold human hair for deer repellent; also used for tying tomato plants to stakes. ➡
- A wagon wheel or stepladder for a neatly compartmented herb garden.
- Broken flowerpots to make a garden path ⬇









COAT HANGERS

Another way to mark what's been planted is to use your empty seed packets for identification. Here's another great opportunity to recycle those extra wire coat hangers. I cut the wire coat hanger in half, unwind the curved hook, straighten out the wire, and then make an upside-down "U" at one end. The seed packet goes over the "U", which is then covered with a plastic envelope or bag to protect it from the weather, and the wire is inserted into the soil.

In both the spring and fall, you can also use wire hangers to secure floating row covers to protect tender plants from frost and cold. I make six-inch-long "hairpins" out of the hangers to keep these featherweight spun plastic sheets (called Reemay) from blowing in the wind.

THE LAYERED GARDEN

Making raised beds is a snap now that I use the "lasagna" gardening method—it's almost a "no-work" way to garden. Moreover, the premise is made-to-order for recyclers. Pick a site where you later want to plant, cover it with newspaper about a dozen sheets thick, soak, then cover the paper with organic material (grass clippings, weeds, chopped leaves, kitchen scraps, horse and/or cow manure, and anything else that will eventually decompose). Like lasagna, the organics are layered. When the pile is a foot or so high, cover it with plastic and let nature and time work for you. In six to eight weeks, you'll have a raised bed of compost ready for planting.

Because I have a fairly large garden, I also have a conventional compost pile to which I add paper from my office shredder, grass clippings, dead-headed flowers, and bags of leaves scavenged from in front of strangers' houses that were left for garbage pickup. And when my good neighbor Sandy Frisoli has her horse stalls cleaned, all that good stuff is also added to the compost pile.

GETTING INTO THE SWING OF IT!

By using lots of compost and the lasagna method, gardening has become a lot easier.



Yet because it's easier, my garden keeps getting bigger and it takes more and more of my time—so much so that I've given up golf! But it hasn't been a total loss—the most visible recycling effort in my garden is my "golf bag tool carrier."

Being frugal, I couldn't bear to see my two-wheeled golf bag pull cart go to waste, so I "retired" the clubs and now use the bag to hold my long-handled garden tools. The pockets that once held tees and balls now stash pruners, a trowel, seed packets, and bug repellant.

And if the pockets get too full of garden stuff, I stow the excess in the recycled rural mailbox, which sits on a recycled post in a corner of my recycled garden. There's literally no end to what you can recycle in your own gardening pursuits.

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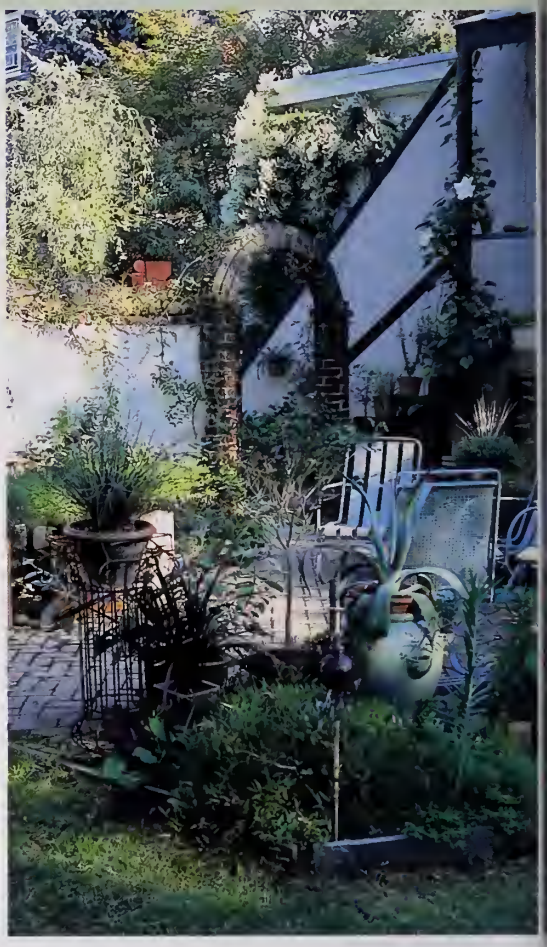
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DESIGNING FOR SMALL SPACES

Hiding an Unpleasant View

by Jeff Jabco



I know of very few home gardeners that have developed their landscape according to an overall master plan. Most create their gardens piecemeal as time, money and interest allow. This is how Judy Penney and Larry Anastasi have shaped their Swarthmore, PA plot over the past 30 years. Like many of us, their goals have been to create an outdoor area to entertain guests, block out objectionable views, display their favorite plants, and grow vegetables and herbs.

Judy and Larry's three-story brick home was built in 1903 on a quarter-acre lot. A detached garage sits at the back corner of the lot just 20 feet from the kitchen door. When Judy and Larry moved here in 1967, they realized that the view from the kitchen door and window looked directly at the garage and the vehicles in the driveway. But within several years, they had built an 8-foot-high wall that joins the near edge of the garage to the steps that come from the kitchen door. A brick arch connects the end of the wall to the kitchen, allowing a path to the rear garden. Built into the wall is a recessed, semi-circular niche that contains a climbing rose (*Rosa* 'White Dawn'), dark burgundy-leaved Queen Anne's lace (*Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing') and a white-flowered clematis.

Several years later, Larry built a brick terrace next to this wall in the corner of the garden closest to the kitchen door. The placement of the terrace here is ideal. Because it is convenient to the kitchen and adjacent to the central turf area, it allows a larger gathering to spread out into the entire rear garden. The brick terrace is shaded in late afternoon by a neighbor's catalpa tree and the garage. One gets a comfortable feeling sitting on the terrace, with a wall on one side and the garden on the other.



Photos by Jeff Jabco

Over time, a 6-foot natural wood fence was installed to enclose two sides of the garden and create a separation from three neighbors' rear yards. Today, there are just glimpses of this fence visible, because of the shaded mixed border that conceals it. These beds are filled with Judy's year-long display of hydrangeas, rhododendrons, boxwood, hosta, brunnera, kirengeshoma, Japanese anemone, carex, ferns, chelone, asarum and alchemilla. Judy's personal motto, "We have a new plant—now where can we put it?," works well in this area. As such, the fence is partially covered with a melange of *Parthenocissus henryana*, climbing hydrangea, euonymus and clematis.

The walls of the kitchen, living room and sun-porch bed also complement the garden space. The vegetables, herbs and figs take advantage of these south-facing walls and the sunniest area of the garden. The entire property is flat, so the vegetable bed was built up about one foot higher than the rest of the garden to provide adequate drainage and enable the soil to warm up earlier in the spring.

The beautiful result of the Penney/Anastasi collaboration is based on good design sense and thoughtful plant combinations, quality hardscape materials, and remembering the design elements of *enclosure* and *screening*. With a little time and planning, this couple has proved that there is a way to screen out the neighbors...beautifully.

Jeff Jabco is the director of grounds and coordinator of horticulture at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.







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GARDENING INDOORS

by Ilene Sternberg



Cooped up in little Dilbert cubicles all week must be tough on plant lovers unless they import a potted friend or two to remind them of life outside. Canvassing some office-bound folk, I learned that although gardening is a known stress reliever even on a small scale, workplace gardening is no bed of roses. I was regaled with morbid accounts of death and desiccation, and sickening stories of wax plant wars, aloe abuse, and Swedish ivy sabotage.

"I had an aloe growing happily in my office window," one raconteur began. "Oh, *sure*—occasionally, I came close to poking an eye out when I'd reach over to get something, but it was worth the risk. Apparently, though, the janitor didn't think so. Every morning I'd find broken tips or bent blades oozing juice. Ultimately," she snickered, "I replaced it with a prickly-pear cactus."

Then there's the tale of a high-decibel shouting match erupting between cube-mates, one obsessively orderly, the other decidedly not, when the former accused the latter of "deliberately overgrowing" onto his desk. A wayward wax plant accused of a hostile takeover became the pawn in a personality conflict requiring binding union arbitration and downsizing by scissors to resolve.

Another worker caught her co-worker dumping Snapple in her Swedish Ivy. Can't we all just get along?

Plants are a great business asset, actually. A 25-year NASA study resulted in the book, *How to Grow Fresh Air: 50 Houseplants That Purify Your Home or Office,* by environmental engineer B. C. Wolverton (Penguin, 1997). It shows how ordinary plants can combat "sick building syndrome" and cleanse surroundings of common pollutants. Also, Dr. W. says, "Live tropicals make people more productive." Go figure.

Do you know *which* plants to place *where* in the office? Wolverton's book and others give lighting, temperature, humidity requirements, and the draft tolerance of plants to match the specifics of your workplace situation. Most varieties sold in supermarkets can grow under office conditions. Choose the least finicky.

Bromeliads have showy long-lasting inflorescences and require only occasional watering. Orchids in flower will bloom for months. Other low-light choices, such as peace lilies, (*Spathiphyllum* sp.), cast-iron plants (*Aspidistra* sp.), pothos (*Epipremnum aureum*), and Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema* sp.) are relatively foolproof. The oxalic acid in *Dieffenbachia* foliage, however, can cause the tongue to swell and render one speechless—hence, its common name "dumbcane." Skip it if you can't resist the urge to stir your supervisor's coffee with a leaf or two.

Watering can be a concern in office environments, too. It's impractical to attach a hose to the men's room faucet and drag it over to water your plants, or to haul sloshing buckets over the carpet, perhaps short-circuiting the Xerox machine with an accidental spill. Still, here are a few tips for office-plant etiquette:

- Place greenery where watering won't endanger papers, books, electronic equipment, or furnishings.
- Discourage colleagues from pouring copy toner or leftover Double Mocha Frappuccino into plants.
- Try new self-watering pots that require refilling only every five weeks (they work on a vacuum principle, using a sensor that automatically starts and stops water held in a reservoir).
- Use a long-neck watering can to avoid desk spills.

In sum, I believe it was Teddy Roosevelt who said, "Water warily and carry a big roll of Bounty." And quit bickering over plants, or you'll be sent back to your Dilbert cube without any coffee break.



Ilene Sternberg is an award-winning freelance writer who pens a gardening column for *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware.

SPRING FORWARD

by Bill Thomas

Spring is the time to fully celebrate the warmth and sunshine of the season. I want shrubs that blast their way into the garden, leaving no doubt spring has struck. Bright, unabashed color is what calls to me. To me, spring is winterhazel (*Corylopsis sp.*) and Korean rhododendron (*Rhododendron mucronulatum*).

Like many people in the Delaware Valley, I was introduced to these plants at Winterthur. Henry Francis du Pont loved purple and lavender combined with yellow, using these colors together in the garden and in his home (especially near windows looking out on the combination). I walk through the winterhazel walk at Winterthur each April. Their purple and yellow blossoms complement each other and are a sure sign that spring has arrived.

Winterhazel is a genus with 30 species, but in this area we only see five or six, plus some hybrids. I have trouble telling many of them apart, and, reassuringly, so do taxonomists. Many non-gardeners confuse them with forsythias, but winterhazel color, occurring about the same time, is much less harsh. The flowers hang down in clusters of three or more blossoms.

Probably the easiest to use in most gardens is the smallest member of the genus. Buttercup winterhazel (*C. pauciflora*) bears pale yellow flowers on plants 4 to 6 feet tall and wide. I've interplanted it around some dwarf conifers. A golden thread false cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Filifera Aurea') repeats the yellow.

The dark green of the dwarf Hinoki false cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Gracilis') and of Emerald Sentinel™ juniper (*Juniperus virginiana* 'Corcorcor'*) provide a great backdrop for the pale yellow flowers. Indeed, most early blooming shrubs are best with a dark background, as the shrubs by themselves become lost. The juxtaposition is truly complementary, because dark areas need the brightness these flowers bring. Think of all the evergreen hedgerows and screens that would be improved by flowering shrubs.

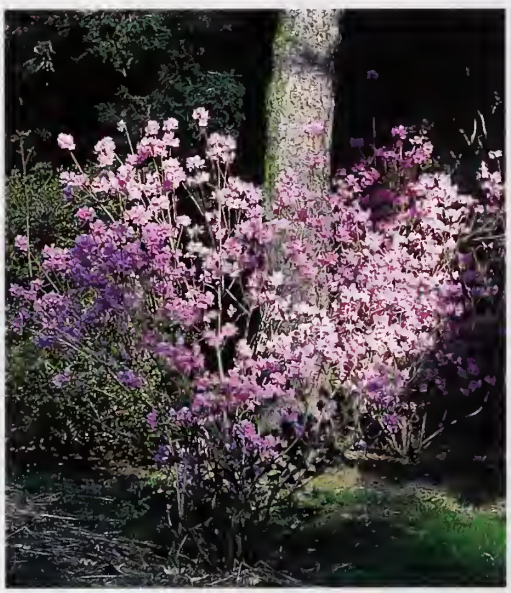
Corylopsis 'Winterthur' is a hybrid found on the Winterthur property and is only slightly larger, in flowers and overall size, than buttercup winterhazel. If I were starting over, I would have planted it instead because it is a bit more showy. A newly named cultivar, *C. glabrescens* 'Longwood Chimes' (bottom photo), is noteworthy for blooming 10 days later than 'Winterthur' (and thus more likely to miss those pesky frosts). It is large flowered, very fragrant and grows about 8 feet tall by 8 feet wide.

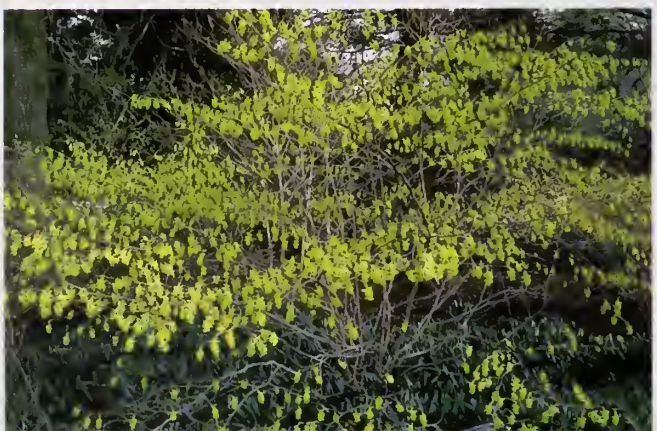
Blooming with the winterhazels is the equally deciduous Korean rhododendron (*Rhododendron mucronulatum*). Its lavender flowers are the perfect contrast to the pale yellow of the winterhazels. Longwood's designers were so enthralled by the Winterthur combination that you can now find it near the Longwood waterfall.

In fact, many find the lavender of Korean rhododendron to be an awkward color unless used with pale yellow. I don't, but I still am very fond of the cultivar 'Cornell Pink' (top photo), which is a clear pink without blue in it. *R. mucronulatum* is also best set off by a dark background. I planted a 'Cornell Pink' outside my guest room window, formerly my home office. I look out on it from above, and it is backed by a ground cover of winter aconite (*Eranthis hyemalis*) foliage, which has bloomed in the preceding two months. From the street, the rhododendron is backed by the blue stone of the house. In my imaginary landscape, the ground cover might include *Hedera helix* 'Buttercup'* for a permanent yellow contrast.

For those who prefer their rhododendrons evergreen, *Rhododendron* 'Llenroc' (Cornell spelled backwards) fits the bill. It has small leaves with flowers similar in color to 'Cornell Pink'. It's one of my favorite evergreen rhododendrons and blooms just a bit later than the Korean rhododendrons.

Photos by Bill Thomas





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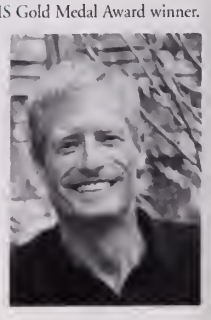
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Photos by Margaret Funderburg

Philadelphia Green Gets Into the "EMPOWERMENT ZONE"

by John Gannon

Like many northern US cities, the city of Philadelphia suffered a significant loss of population in the last half of the 20th century, due largely to a declining industrial base and shifting population patterns. One result has been "vacant land," the abandoned lots and crumbling houses left in the wake of once-thriving neighborhoods. The 31,000+ vacant parcels throughout Philadelphia represent a blight that diminishes property values and discourages reinvestment opportunities.

In the last several years, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program developed a "clean and green" approach to stabilize vacant land. Viewing vacant land as an *opportunity* instead of a liability, this approach calls for using reclaimed "clean and green" lots, gardens, parks, and other public spaces as a tool for urban revitalization. It requires only a small investment and basic upkeep, yet it can yield tremendous quality of life benefits for struggling neighborhoods.

In the city's New Kensington section, Philadelphia Green helped to establish a vacant-land management system in 1995. This effort has employed a number of treatment options for abandoned land, including regular cleaning and mowing, tree plantings and the transfer of vacant single lots to adjacent homeowners as private "sideyards." "All of this work has made a positive impact," says resident Lou John. "It gives people a sense of pride and encouragement—it gives them hope for the neighborhood."

Over in the federally-funded American Street Empowerment Zone, an old industrial area, Philadelphia Green has overseen the cleanup of 13 acres of blighted ground—essentially an area the size of Penn's Landing. This has dramatically increased the "curb appeal" of the area, and brought a new sense of safety, as these once-trashed sites were often havens for illegal activity. New projects are also slated this year for the city's two other Empowerment Zones—West Philadelphia and North Central.

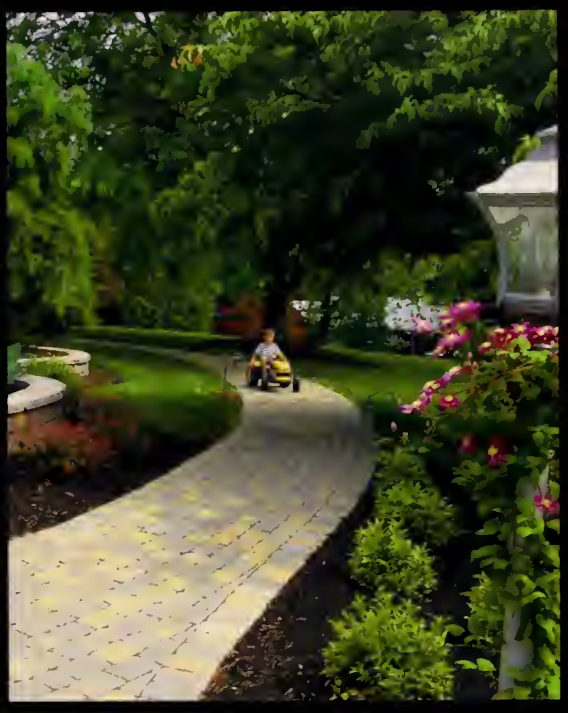
"The green space offers a 'slice of the suburbs' in the city," says Catherine Califano, economic development director of the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone. "It's helping bring more business opportunities to the area." Moreover, city government has taken an active interest in this approach to land management, adopting Philadelphia Green's methods as a part of Mayor John Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.

Philadelphia Green's Bob Grossmann observes the newly greened landscape and observes, "This neighborhood has reached a 'tipping point.' Now everywhere you go, you see a green space instead of a trashed lot. That's real progress."

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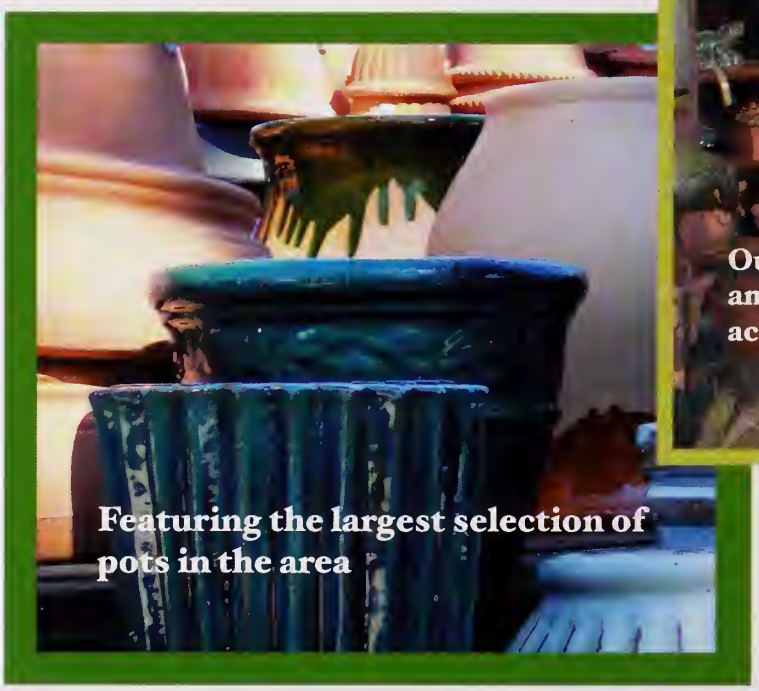


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Cover photo by Pete Prown

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GREEN scene

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Pete Brown/Photographed at Longwood Gardens

WATER

Last fall, after suffering through another summer of drought, some local gardeners were claiming that the weather patterns of the Mid-Atlantic were changing, becoming more akin to the extremes of the Midwestern prairie. Few, however, could have foreseen the extremely soggy winter of 2002-2003. Today, it seems like we're back to the same old "feast or famine" approach to water in our region—there's usually either too much or too little, and there's *nuthin'* we can do about it. And that's where this issue of *Green Scene* begins.

Originally, we had discussed doing an issue about water gardening, but members of our PHS Publications Committee quickly pointed out that this subject has been done to death. What better a topic, they proposed at a December meeting, than to look at different aspects of H_2O in the garden, from water gardens to conservation and everything in between. Thus the goal for our annual "single subject" issue was to feature a variety of water-related stories, all of which aim to give us a better understanding of planting and growing in our area and our own backyards.

As many of you know, gardening in the Mid-Atlantic requires an "expect the unexpected" attitude. In the 15 years that I've gardened here, the water patterns have been mercurial at best: perfect summers of sun and regular rain; dry, hot springs followed by wet, moldy summers; and of course, the kind of arid, parched growing seasons that make one want to throw in the trowel, so to speak.

As a result, when gardeners ask me for advice on great perennials, trees and shrubs for the Mid-Atlantic, I usually recommend anything that's tough with a capital 'T' and able to survive a lengthy drought. Unless a gardener is willing to put in the time and effort to baby those so-called "marginal" plants that may or may not survive in our Zone 6/7 region, I always veer towards a pest- and disease-resistant plant that can survive in our tough-love environment. (That's also a qualifying factor for PHS's Gold Medal Plant program, which identifies the best trees, shrubs and vines for this part of the country.)

But it's not all doom 'n' gloom in the water department. In this issue, we also touch on the joys of having water in the garden, particularly the latest fad of "water container gardening." With just a barrel, a small pump and an aquatic plant or two, you can have a beautiful water feature...and one that's portable, too. We will also learn a little about water conservation in dry times (just what is *graywater*?), as well as how to maintain a healthy lawn even during the hottest weeks of August.

In all, we hope that this issue of *Green Scene* conveys how water is so intrinsically tied to the gardening experience. A better understanding of this relationship will make us all better gardeners and hopefully, save us some time, too—I mean, really, who likes to stand around every evening with a hose for hours? Not me.

When you get a better grasp of a plant's watering needs—whether it's a fussy perennial in the border or a tough-as-nails fescue for the lawn—you'll spend less time slaving in your garden and more time enjoying it.

Pete Brown

email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*



LEUCANTHEMUM

A Super Drought Beater

The Perennial Plant Association is pleased to announce that the Perennial Plant of the Year 2003 is *Leucanthemum* 'Becky'. PPA members selected the Becky Shasta daisy on the basis of its bright white flowers, sturdy stems, and long season of bloom. Better yet, 'Becky' is highly drought-tolerant. When other perennials wither from the heat, this plant just keeps blooming and blooming and....

Contemporary nomenclature now lists this Shasta daisy, a former member of the genus *Chrysanthemum*, as *Leucanthemum* 'Becky' Superbum Group. Shasta daisy is a member of the ASTERACEAE family and is a hybrid created by Luther Burbank in 1890. The name of "Shasta daisy" supposedly comes from the fact that the clean white petals of this daisy reminded Burbank of the snow on Mount Shasta in California.

CHARACTERISTICS: 'Becky' has sturdy, upright stems that grow 40 inches tall, with a similar spread. Three-inch-wide, single white flowers with contrasting yellow centers appear at the end of June or early July when other Shastas are finishing.

HARDINESS: Grows reliably in USDA Hardiness Zones 4-9.

LIGHT: Full sun, tolerates partial shade.

SOIL: Growth is optimum in moist, but well-drained soil.

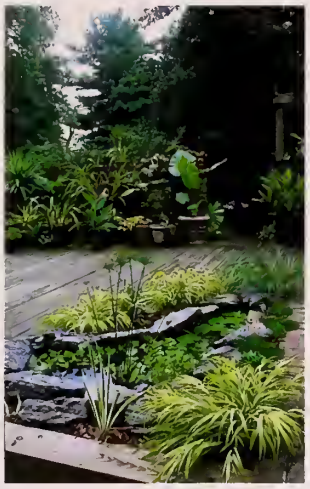
PLANTING TIPS: Plant in fall or spring. It tolerates a wide range of conditions in full sun or partial shade. Deadheading encourages re-bloom and extends the flowering season.

For more information, visit *www.perennialplant.org*



photos by Pete Prown

A Pond Hits the Deck



There's nothing quite so soothing as the sound of trickling water, especially on a balmy summer evening as you sip a glass of wine and enjoy a relaxing dinner.

That's just what Sandy Ewing had in mind when he decided to build a pond—not in his garden, but right into the deck where he and his wife spend most of their summertime evenings. The Ewings had the deck built when they moved into the house in Swarthmore. It sits on top of a blacktop driveway and was designed with a cutout for plants, so it was not that much of a leap to think of filling it with water instead of soil.

"It's so nice to have the sound of water as we sit outdoors," says Sandy, "And since it's close to the house, there's a hose nearby, as well as an electric outlet for the pump, so it's really easy to maintain."

Plants are a big part of this little pond, too. The pond is surrounded by Scotch moss (*Sangina subulata*) and the low-growing ornamental grass, *Hakonechloa.* There are also hardy miniature waterlilies that grace the water's surface. And no pond would be complete without fish. (Although the first batch of koi "bit the dust" during the harsh winter just past, Sandy has high hopes for their successors.) Finally, groups of potted plants, mostly tropicals, help create a lush, relaxing environment—perfect for a summer hangout.

"I'm a real convert," says Sandy. "Ponds do not take that much effort, especially considering the amount of pleasure they give you in return."

—Jane Carroll

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Drought-Tolerant Planting
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Dan Benarcik
July 23, 6pm to 8pm

Bog & Water Gardening
A walk at Chanticleer by
Joe Henderson
August 5, 6pm to 8pm

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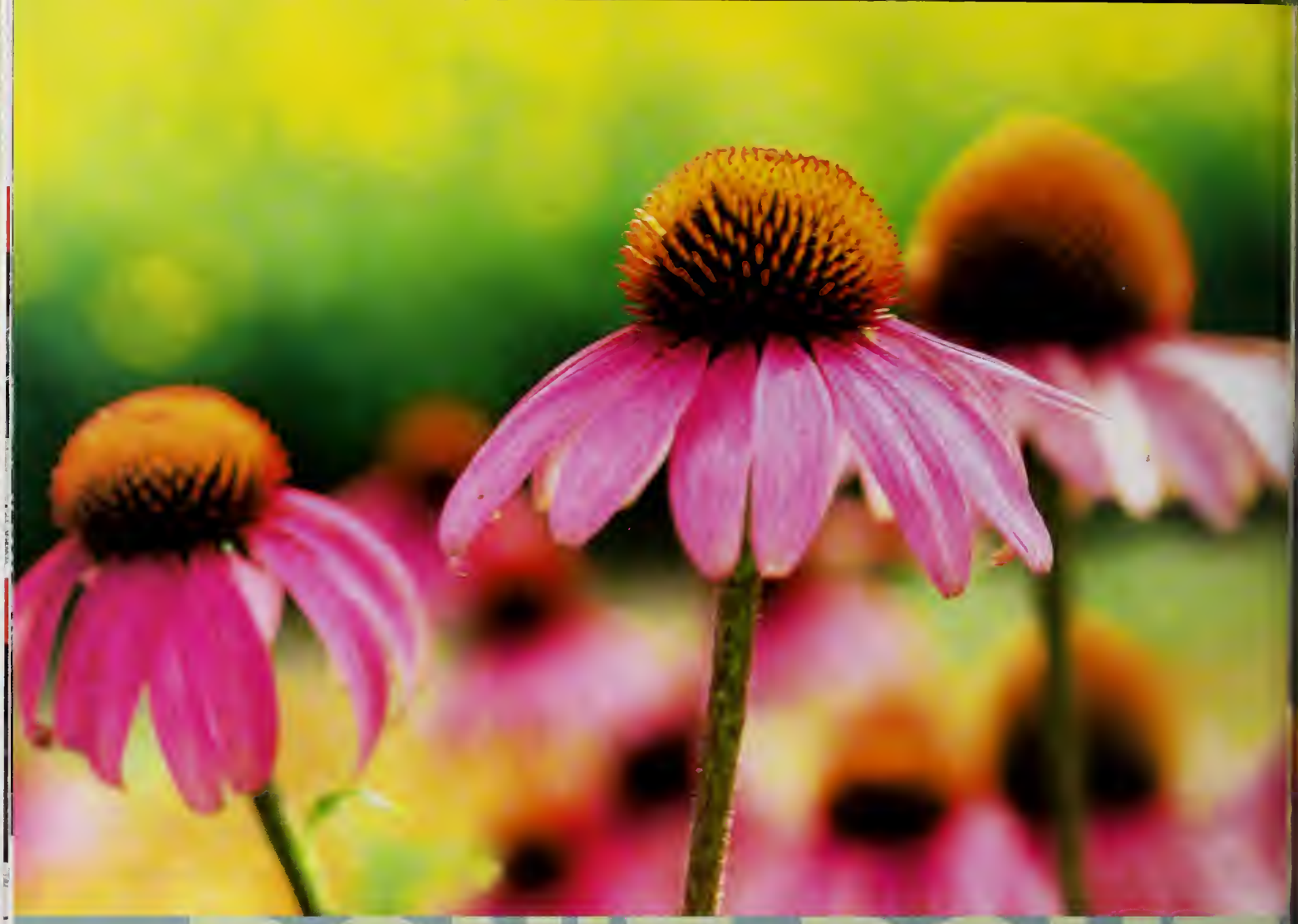
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DON'T POUT ABOUT A DROUGHT

Story & Photography by Rob Cardillo

If you spent half of last summer holding a hose, you're probably looking for some new plants that aren't heavy drinkers. To help narrow your choices, we asked five local garden and landscape experts what plants topped their drought-tolerant list.

Pete Moscufo

(Piedmont Designs, Kimberton, PA)



Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) (opposite page)

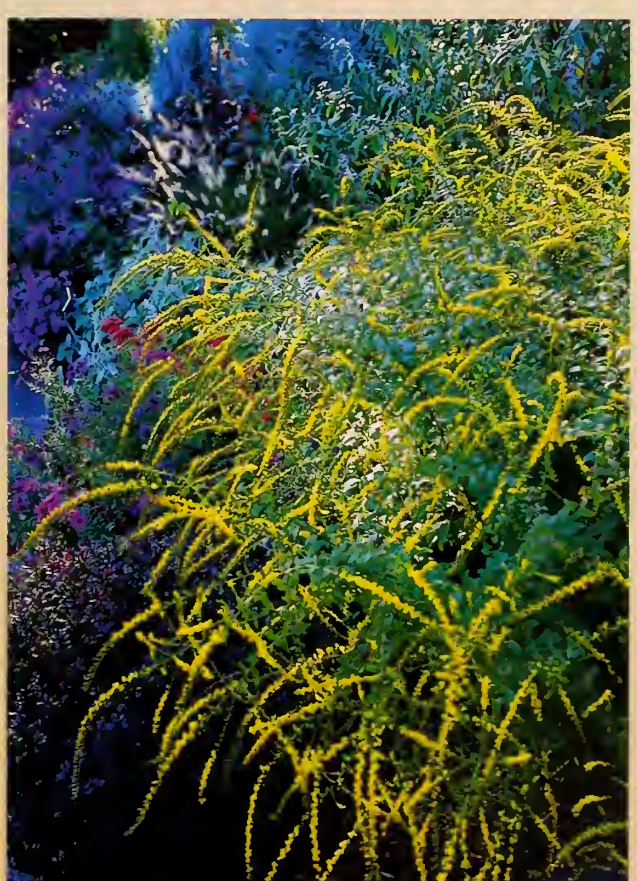
"During one of the worst droughts I can remember, purple coneflower bloomed in my harshly exposed urban yard while the lawn, shrubs and trees all went dead brown. It's a great native perennial that attracts butterflies, hummingbirds and pollinating insects. I'm especially enamored with the toughness and elegance of the straight species. I think some of the hybrids look a little artificial, however."

Herbs (left)

"Herbs such as *Santolina*, lavender, thyme and rosemary are definitely underused in perennial beds, and these four are especially well-suited to drought conditions. Herbs as a group offer textural and height options to the gardener, and many look great right on through the winter. They're also wonderfully fragrant and have many culinary uses."

Goldenrod (*Solidago* sp.) (below)

"I can always rely on a fall show from goldenrod even after a droughty summer. 'Fireworks' puts on a spectacular display when many perennials are on the way out. It looks incredible paired with ornamental grasses like *Panicum* or other fall-flowering perennials such as *Aster* 'Blue Bird' or *Boltonia*. It's equally stunning against a backdrop of red-foliaged chokeberry or blueberry.



Chris Myers

(Bedminster Organics, Bedminster, PA)



Prickly Pear Cactus (*Opuntia*)

"The hotter it gets, the better it is for prickly pear. It's native to some areas of New Jersey and Pennsylvania and can easily take a hard dry summer. The flower is pretty, the fruit is edible, and it has definite winter interest. Just don't plant it in high traffic areas!"

Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) (right)

"Once this grass gets established, it's pretty much on its own. I really like 'The Blues'—it spreads easily and the new growth has great color. Good as a back-of-the-border plant, it mixes well with almost everything. Planted in big swaths, it makes a real statement—especially in the winter."

Texas bluestar (*Amsonia hubrectii*) (bottom)

"Once established, I've never had to water this shrub-sized perennial, and it looks so great when situated next to something bold. It's long-lived, has no insect problems, and the feathery, thread-leaf leaves turn deep yellow in the fall. I'm dying to try 'Blue Ice'—a newer cultivar with dark blue flowers."





Tom Borkowski

(Spruce Hill Design, Rose Valley, PA)





Crape Myrtle
(*Lagerstroemia indica*) (top left)

"These flowered fantastically during last year's extreme heat and dryness. And they provide azalea-like colors in the dead of summer when most perennial gardens are looking a little spent. They used to be considered marginally hardy in our area, but if their roots have had time to develop, they'll almost always come back after a tough winter."

Heavenly Bamboo
(*Nandina domestica*) (top right)

"When other shrubs were wilting last year, nandina looked just fine. It's mostly known for its beautiful red berries in winter, but I also like the distinctive, bamboo-like foliage. The new growth of 'Plum Passion' is intensely purple and I just keep cutting it back during the season for more color."



Black-eyed Susan
(*Rudbeckia fulgida*) (left)

"This plant has been maligned because it's so common, but you can practically plant it in a parking lot and walk away. You get color for six weeks with very little water or care, and there's always a value to a plant like that. 'Goldsturm' is a good, low compact choice with strong stems, but there are lots of other tough rudbeckias to choose from."

Kevin Burke

(Burke Brothers Landscape Contractors, Inc., Glenside, PA)





Paperbark Maple (*Acer griseum*) (top right)

"We transplanted some larger-sized paperbarks last June and they survived the very dry months that followed—even though they're not normally considered very drought-tolerant. Here's a tree that's both sturdy and graceful, and the exfoliating bark is so attractive. It's a beauty all year round and especially in the winter."



Coral Bells 'Autumn Bride' (*Heuchera villosa*)

"Last summer, we planted a lot of these, including some smaller 2-quart ones. And they all seemed to survive despite the hot summer and harsh winter. It's a super choice for dry shade, and the lime green leaves and late summer flowers set it apart from other heucheras."

Boxwood 'Green Velvet' (*Buxus microphylla*) (center right)

"At one of our sites, the homeowners left for a few months only to return to a bunch of burned-out perennials and annuals. However, this rounded and compact boxwood just kept moving right along with virtually no watering. Boxwood isn't typically thought of as especially drought-tolerant, so we were pleasantly surprised by 'Green Velvet' (a PHS Gold Medal Plant). We like to use it as a low hedge and as an accent in foundation beds."



Abelia* × *grandiflora (bottom right)

"Once established, these hard-working shrubs perform remarkably well with no irrigation at all. The small leaves are dark and shiny and the arching branches are tipped with tiny tube-shaped flowers in early summer. A true maintenance-free plant."

Stephanie Cohen

(perennial plant expert)



***Agastache* 'Blue Fortune'** (top left)

"This fragrant perennial flowered like crazy all summer long and was a real butterfly magnet. It held up well in an unwatered meadow that was dry as toast last year. If you can't grow this, give up and get plastic flowers."

Sedums

"These succulents always seem to survive a drought, but the bigger ones may not get as tall as they normally would and may lose a few lower leaves. But that just means they're less floppy, and that's fine with me. The group that includes 'Autumn Joy', 'Matrona' and 'Frosty Morn' all seem to shrug off the heat and say, 'So what?'"

'Knockout' Rose (bottom left)

"While my other roses were just sticks with thorns during the drought, 'Knockout' didn't lose any leaves at all. With just a little rain, it started pushing out new growth and cherry-red blooms. No black spot, no mildew, and no fertilizer. This may be the most outstanding rose to come along in 50 years."

For information on other terrific plants that are drought and disease resistant, check out PHS's Gold Medal Plant program at *www.goldmedalplants.com*





15 Drought-Tolerant Perennials to Know & Use

- Artemesia (*Artemisia ludoviciana* 'Silver King' & 'Silver Queen')
- Blanket flower (*Gaillardia* sp.)
- Coral Bells 'Autumn Bride' (*Heuchera villosa*)
- Daylily (*Hemerocalis* sp.)
- Geum (*Geum* sp.)
- Goldenrain tree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*)
- Lambs ears (*Stachys byzantia* sp.)
- Lenten rose (*Helleborus orientalis*)
- Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*)
- Sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*)
- Siberian bugloss (*Brunnera* sp.)
- Switch grass (*Panicum virgatum* 'Heavy Metal')
- Tickseed (*Coreopsis* sp.)
- Yarrow (*Achillea* sp.)
- Yellow coneflower (*Echinacea paradoxa*)

Container

When the backyard disaster occurred, I thought my water gardening days were over. In September of 1989, Hurricane Hugo dumped 11 inches of water onto my property in a matter of a few hours, completely swamping my decade-old, in-ground pond. The water sluiced under the flexible liner and collapsed it from one side. Stones holding its edges slipped into the pond as the soil under the liner imploded, toppling pots of plants, mashing the immersed plants and trapping fish under the folds of the liner.

The shock of the destruction was later matched by the shock of the subsequent investigation. The soil was really unsuitable for supporting a pond liner without the installation of cinderblock sides and completely redoing the pond. It was amazing that the pond had held up as long as it had.

Reluctantly, I made the tough decision not to rebuild the pond, which had become my favorite of all the gardens on the property. However, the prospect of moving in a couple of years, the recognition that pulling heavy, wet pots out of the pond was not getting any easier, and the significant financial commitment required to re-establish the pond prompted me, ultimately, to fill it in. But giving up the pond did not mean I had to give up water gardening completely; I decided to garden in water using containers instead.

WATER PLAY

Water gardening in containers has turned out to be wonderful fun for lots of reasons. Most importantly, there are the plants. Every year, garden centers and specialty catalogs offer more and more plants that thrive in water. Container water gardening offers an opportunity to learn about and experiment with these new and unusual water plants. Turns out that some familiar perennials, such as golden moneywort, ostrich fern, certain hostas and chameleon plants like water too.

Growing in containers is the perfect way to experiment with the plants on a limited scale, before taking the plunge into pond water gardening. I am experimenting now with a container bog garden in a large, blue ceramic pot. Filled with a medium composed mainly of soggy sphagnum peat moss and sand, it features pitcher plants and other bog lovers.

Choosing and using all kinds of wonderful containers, which are now available in abundance, adds to the fun. Anything that will hold water will hold a waterlily and/or papyrus, canna, taro or other aquatic plant. You can use traditional half barrels, pots and kettles, or try found objects such as crocks, discarded bathtubs, galvanized pails, and ceramic jars.

A lotus needs a large pot of its own, while other plants work best in combination with those of contrasting color, size and texture. I once sat down to dinner where the centerpiece was an arrangement of several varieties of aquatic plants in a crystal bowl, their roots secured by colorful gravel. Another time my hostess floated a tiny water lettuce plant in the water-filled wine glass at each place setting.

Gardening in water-filled containers is ideal for people who garden on balconies or in tiny yards where a pond is impossible. It offers the same design challenges as soil-filled containers, but it is a lot easier to change plants around, remove and replace them. Vertical, specimen and trailing plants create carefully balanced arrangements.

Unlike ponds, which are fixed in the landscape, containers of water can be moved, rearranged and rotated to suit the season, the location of the sun, and the gardener's fancy. Another plus: container water gardening is much easier on my back when I set the containers on bricks or other supports so that pots are somewhat above ground level.

PLANT CARE

Of course, pond water gardening and container water gardening are not mutually exclusive. Why not try both? The techniques are essentially the same. Place immersed plants such as water lilies in individual pots of soil heavy enough to secure their roots so that the soil and the plant do not bob to the surface of the water. Then set one or more of these planted pots on the bottom of the water-filled ornamental container as you would in a pond.

Several varieties of dwarf, or pygmy waterlilies work best in containers. To help keep the water clean, I use oxygenating plants under the water, along with some sort of floating plant such as duckweed or snowflake, to shade the water surface and control the growth of algae—a chronic problem in containers because of the small volume of water. There are several "water cleaning" plants available at nurseries, among them the popular Brazilian waterweed, known botanically as *Egeria densa* (syn. *Anacharis densa*).

Many aquatic plants, such as yellow flag iris, are marginal, meaning that they are most at home at the edges of ponds in water that covers only their feet and ankles. Plant them in soil in individual pots grouped in a shallow ornamental container,

Water Gardening

Story and photography
by Liz Ball



Above: Bowl filled with duckweed and a small waterlily.

Left: A rustic bathtub is home to *Equisetum scirpodes* (dwarf horsetail).







or set them directly into a fancy container partially filled with soil to support them, and flood it with water.

Aquatic plants in containers require the same attention as those in ponds or terrestrial garden beds. They need good sun, fertilizer, occasional grooming, thinning and winter protection or storage. You may need to top off containers with the hose occasionally to replace water that has evaporated in the summer heat. In the spring, the plants need dividing and repotting.

In a water environment, routine pest control must also include mosquito control. Since most containers are so small that the water becomes too hot in the sun for fish to survive (and eat mosquito larvae), use a product containing Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) instead.

WATER YOU WAITING FOR?

Since I began using container ponds, I have a clear conscience about observing water restrictions during these last years of persistent drought, because the containers use so little water.

Most enjoyably, I discovered that much of the wildlife that frequents garden ponds manages to find the container water garden as well. Dragonflies, butterflies, bees, frogs and small mammals visit regularly. The sound of a bubbler or small fountain in the container draws lots of birds, which also appreciate a reliable source of fresh water.

Fascinating wildlife, a bountiful variety of beautiful plants, the relaxing sound of trickling water—I hardly miss my old in-ground pond at all.

Top left: An assemblege of waterlily, water clover, and water hyacinth.

Top right: This container heightens the aquatic theme with its fish-scale ceramic texture.

Bottom: A study in emerald green: duckweed with the larger leaves of a lotus (*Nelumbo nucifera*).

Tips from an Expert

Bob Scanzaroli, a senior gardener at Longwood Gardens, offers the following suggestions based on his extensive experience in designing container water gardens.

- Wait until late May to set up container water gardens. More plant choices are available and most prefer really warm weather.
- Start with the container. Its shape and color dictate plant selection for a formal or informal design.
- Colorful, ornate containers are the trend. Coordinate plant flower and foliage colors with the glazes or patinas on ceramic or metal containers.
- Add black dye to the water. It makes the water seem deeper and reflects the clouds, moonlight or candlelight.
- Cluster several small ornamental containers of aquatic plants, rather than having one large one. They showcase individual plants better and are easier to move around.
- Beware of using very tall plants in water-filled containers. By late summer they act as sails on windy days and can topple easily.
- Do not fill pots for marginal plants with too much soil. Leave a lip of at least 4 inches where water can accumulate and cover the plant's roots and lower stems.
- Make sure containers are in the sun.

Suggested Plants for Container Water Gardening

Bob has also found these plants to be particularly suitable for container water gardens:

Acorus calamus 'Variegatus' (Variegated sweetflag)
Azolla filiculoides (Fairy moss)
Canna 'Bengal Tiger' (Canna)
Colocasia esculenta (Taro)
Cyperus prolifer (Dwarf papyrus)
**Eichhornia crassipes* (Water hyacinth)
**Equisetum scirpoides* (Dwarf horsetail)
**Houttuynia cordata* 'Chameleon' (Chameleon plant)
Iris pseudacorus (Yellow flag iris)
**Lemna minor* (Duck weed)
Lysimachia nummularia 'Aurea' (Golden moneywort)
Myriophyllum aquaticum (Parrot feather)
Nymphaea tetragona 'Helvola' or 'Rubra' (Waterlily)

**Not normally recommended because they are invasive. However, when limited to containers, they are useful and attractive.*

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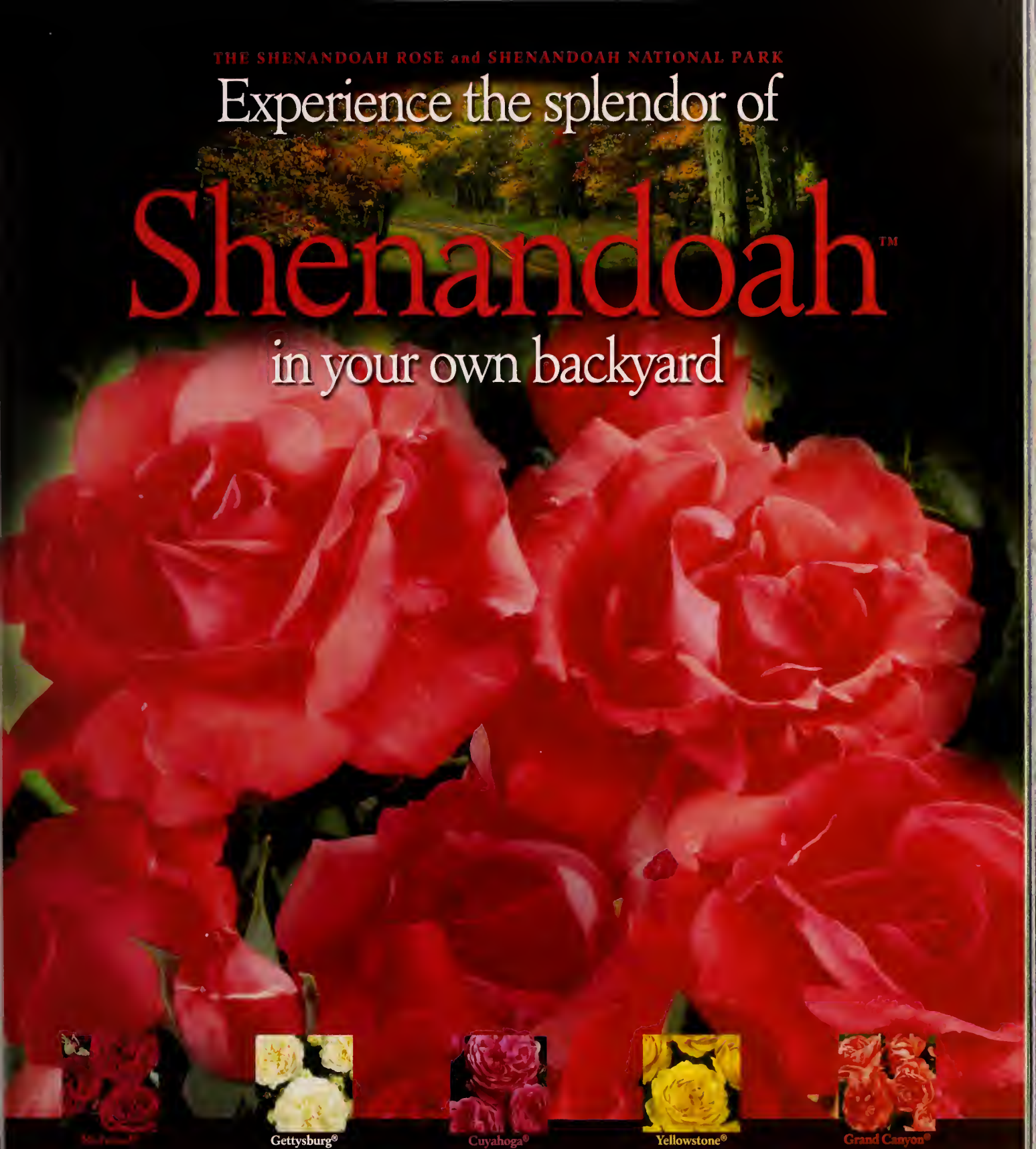
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The Water-

If your battle to keep the grass green during last summer's prolonged drought has you searching for a more drought-tolerant lawn, you may need to look no further than your own backyard. Chances are, it isn't the turf that needs changing, but your own expectations.

Story by Adam Levine

THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM

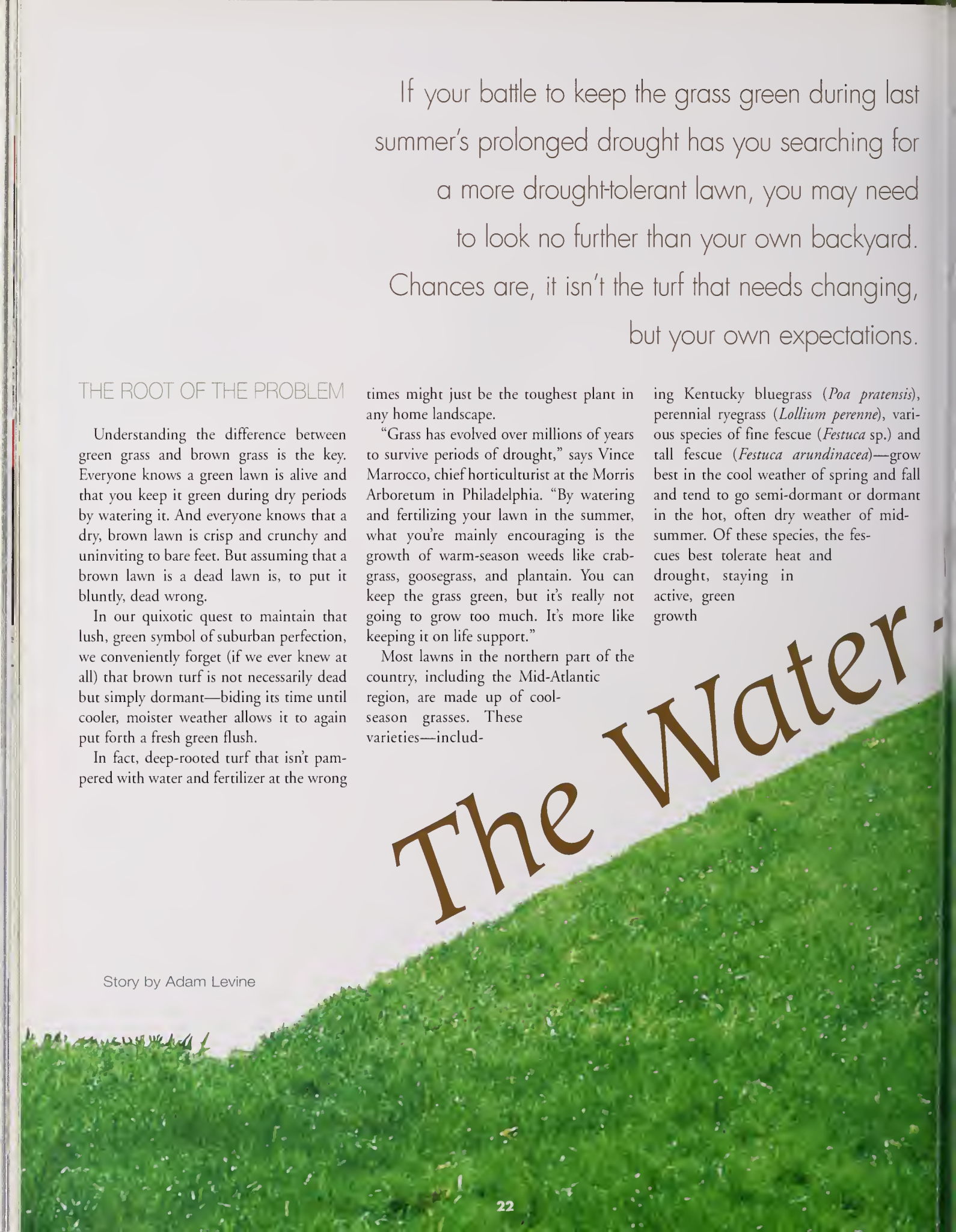
Understanding the difference between green grass and brown grass is the key. Everyone knows a green lawn is alive and that you keep it green during dry periods by watering it. And everyone knows that a dry, brown lawn is crisp and crunchy and uninviting to bare feet. But assuming that a brown lawn is a dead lawn is, to put it bluntly, dead wrong.

In our quixotic quest to maintain that lush, green symbol of suburban perfection, we conveniently forget (if we ever knew at all) that brown turf is not necessarily dead but simply dormant—biding its time until cooler, moister weather allows it to again put forth a fresh green flush.

In fact, deep-rooted turf that isn't pampered with water and fertilizer at the wrong times might just be the toughest plant in any home landscape.

"Grass has evolved over millions of years to survive periods of drought," says Vince Marrocco, chief horticulturist at the Morris Arboretum in Philadelphia. "By watering and fertilizing your lawn in the summer, what you're mainly encouraging is the growth of warm-season weeds like crabgrass, goosegrass, and plantain. You can keep the grass green, but it's really not going to grow too much. It's more like keeping it on life support."

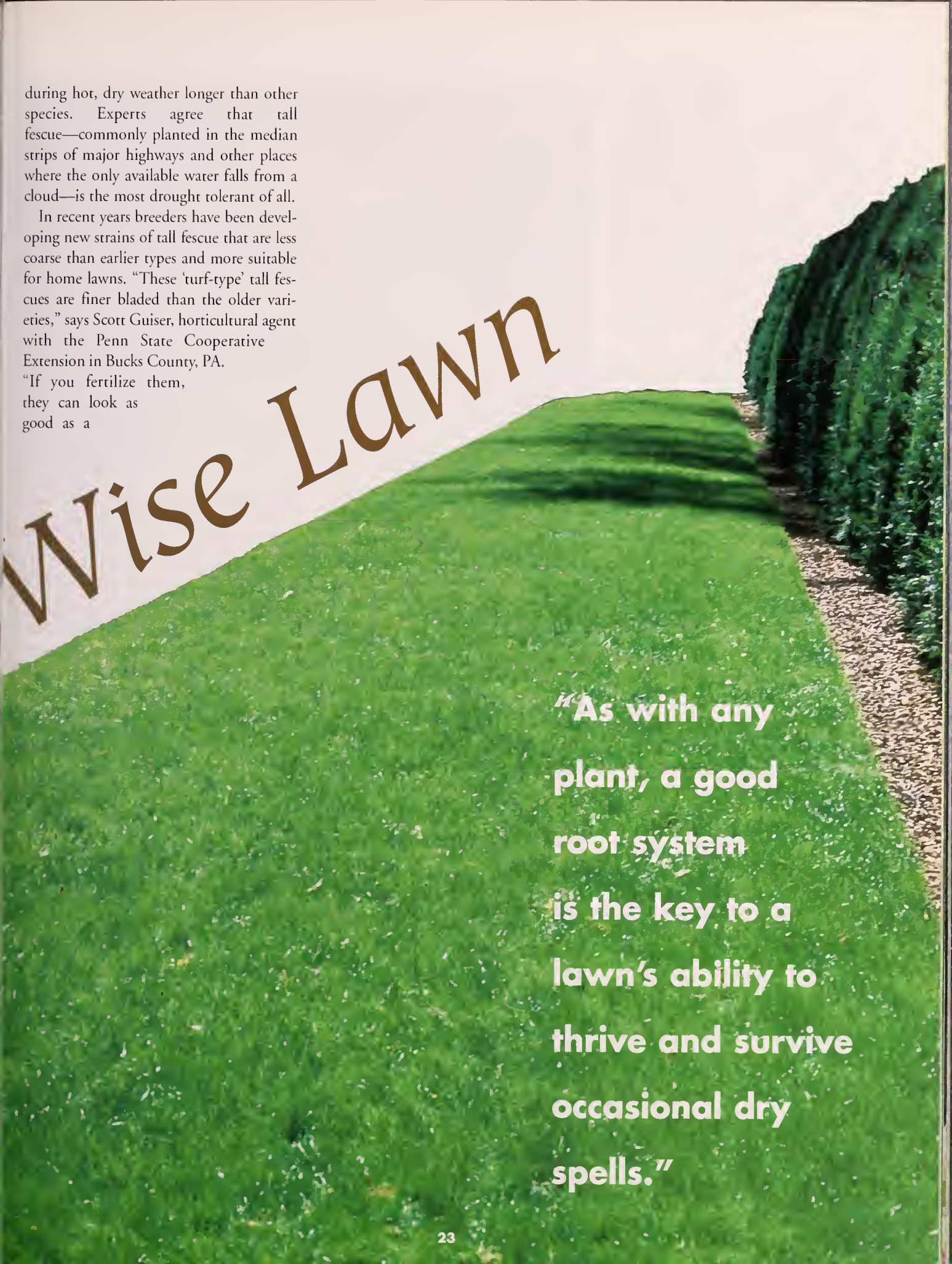
Most lawns in the northern part of the country, including the Mid-Atlantic region, are made up of cool-season grasses. These varieties—including Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), perennial ryegrass (*Lollium perenne*), various species of fine fescue (*Festuca* sp.) and tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*)—grow best in the cool weather of spring and fall and tend to go semi-dormant or dormant in the hot, often dry weather of midsummer. Of these species, the fescues best tolerate heat and drought, staying in active, green growth



during hot, dry weather longer than other species. Experts agree that tall fescue—commonly planted in the median strips of major highways and other places where the only available water falls from a cloud—is the most drought tolerant of all.

In recent years breeders have been developing new strains of tall fescue that are less coarse than earlier types and more suitable for home lawns. "These 'turf-type' tall fescues are finer bladed than the older varieties," says Scott Guiser, horticultural agent with the Penn State Cooperative Extension in Bucks County, PA. "If you fertilize them, they can look as good as a

Wise Lawn



"As with any plant, a good root system is the key to a lawn's ability to thrive and survive occasional dry spells."

lawn of Kentucky bluegrass."

For new lawns, turf-type tall fescue is definitely worth considering. Since it takes longer to establish than other species, Marrocco recommends that tall fescue be seeded only during the cool weather of the fall, allowing it enough time to develop adequate roots to face the heat of the following summer.

DON'T PAMPER THE LAWN

As with any plant, a good root system is the key to a lawn's ability to thrive and survive occasional dry spells. "The top of the grass isn't what's really important," Marrocco insists. "If you don't have a good root system, you're not going to have a good turf no matter what you do."

Sean Kister, section groundskeeper at Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, PA, says that root growth can be encouraged by withholding extra water and fertilizer in the spring, forcing the plants to go deep in search of nutrients and water. For example, he says that a pampered lawn of tall fescue might develop roots only 2 to 6 inches deep, while the same grass on a leaner diet might send its roots as far down as 1 or 2 feet. At Longwood Gardens, Kister says that lawns are only fertilized in the fall, in two applications about six or eight weeks apart.

Marrocco recommends a different approach to achieve the same results. "The key to keeping your lawn green is to fertilize in spring and fall, and water during dry weather in those seasons, to build a strong root system."

While some fertilizer might be necessary to help the lawn fill out and meet your aesthetic standards, too much fertilizer can also weaken a lawn. Excess nitrogen is especially debilitating, encouraging a flush of green top growth at the expense of the roots.

Both Kister and Marrocco agree that no fertilizer should be used during the hot weather when turf growth slows down. They also say that aerating a lawn at least once a year, and perhaps overseeding at the same time, is an excellent way to improve the soil's ability to absorb water and nutrients and help fill out the turf.

As growth slows in the summer, you should mow less frequently and raise the height of the mowing blade. Marrocco says that mowing higher in the summer shades the soil, which is good for cool-season grasses and inhibits germination of warm-season weeds, while mowing the grass lower in the spring helps the soil warm up faster and encourages a new flush of roots.

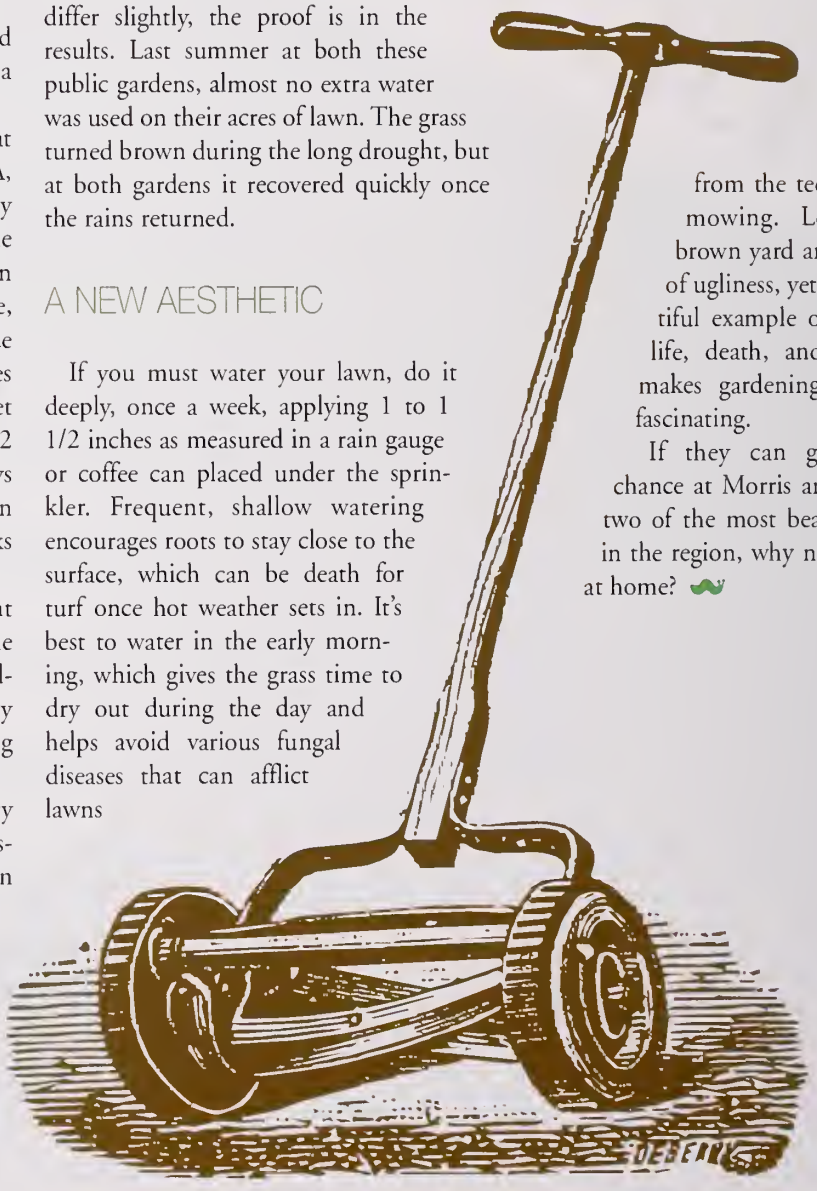
While the methods of turf management at Morris and Longwood may differ slightly, the proof is in the results. Last summer at both these public gardens, almost no extra water was used on their acres of lawn. The grass turned brown during the long drought, but at both gardens it recovered quickly once the rains returned.

A NEW AESTHETIC

If you must water your lawn, do it deeply, once a week, applying 1 to 1 1/2 inches as measured in a rain gauge or coffee can placed under the sprinkler. Frequent, shallow watering encourages roots to stay close to the surface, which can be death for turf once hot weather sets in. It's best to water in the early morning, which gives the grass time to dry out during the day and helps avoid various fungal diseases that can afflict lawns watered at night. Of course, for the sake of water conservation, avoid watering during the heat of the day, when much of a sprinkler's output is lost to evaporation.

Many of us who choose not to water in the summer tolerate our brown lawns because we're "doing good for the environment," much as we might choke down a vegetable we dislike because it's good for our health. What I propose is that we go beyond mere toleration of brown grass and learn to celebrate it. Let's put away the sprinkler (unless, of course, your kids want to play in its spray, which to my mind is the only good use for this tool). Think of a brown dormant lawn as a break from the tedious chore of mowing. Look at your brown yard and see, instead of ugliness, yet another beautiful example of the cycle of life, death, and rebirth that makes gardening so endlessly fascinating.

If they can give brown a chance at Morris and Longwood, two of the most beautiful gardens in the region, why not give it a try at home?



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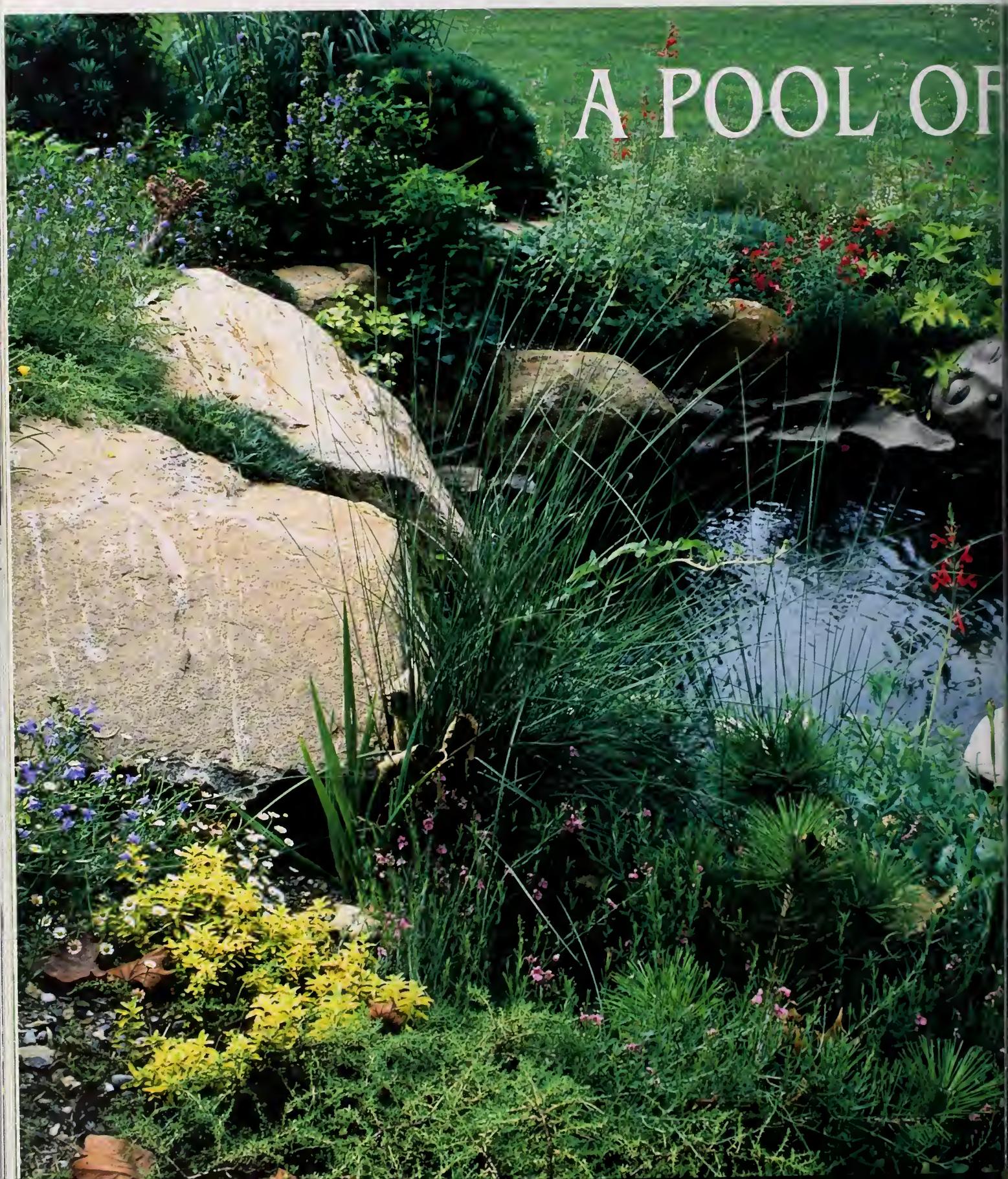
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Fresh Water-Gardening Tips



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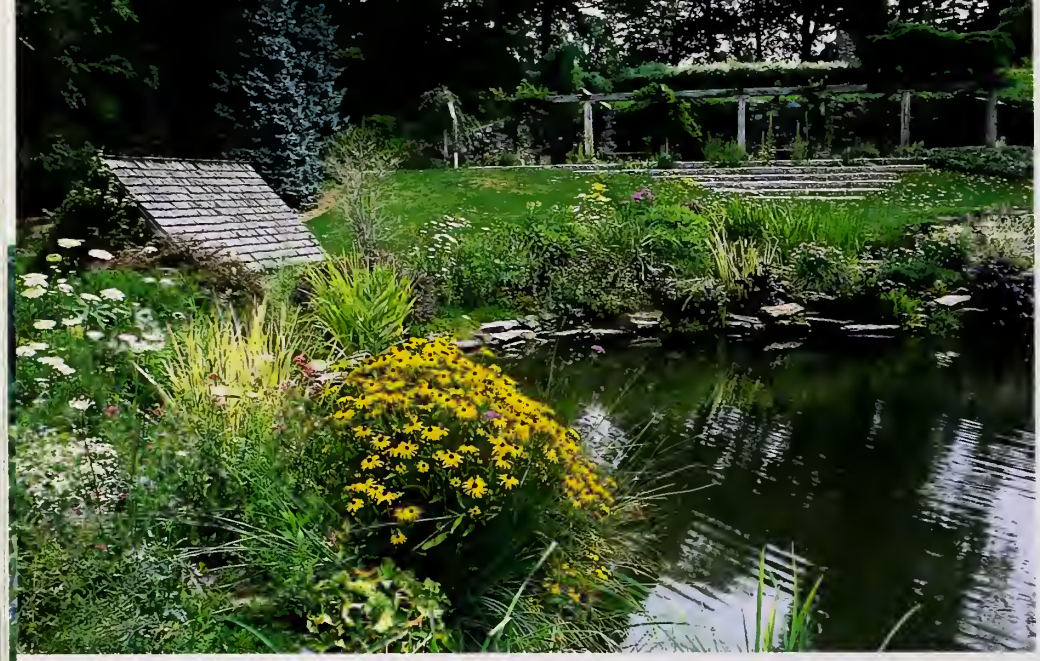
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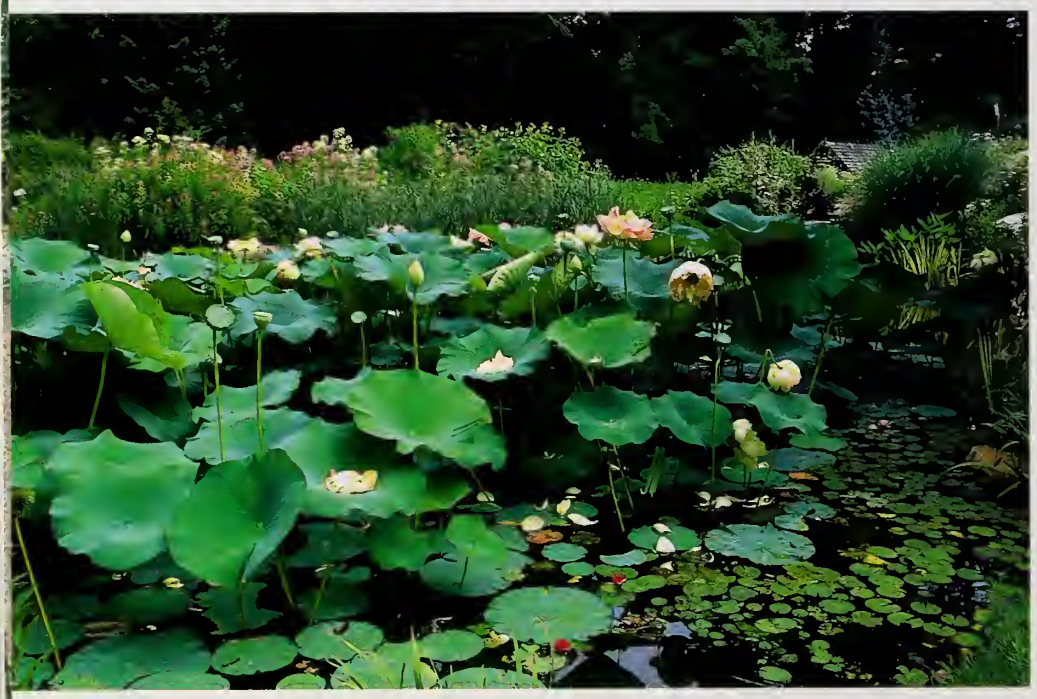


Large stone, sculpture, and the hot-red hue of the cardinal flower surround the artful top pond and waterfall.

Southeastern Pennsylvania is blessed with many of the nation's top horticultural attractions—Longwood Gardens, Historic Bartram's Garden, Morris Arboretum, Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve, Scott Arboretum, Tyler Arboretum, the Philadelphia Flower Show and more.

Among its jewels, however, is Chanticleer, a "pleasure garden" located in the suburb of Wayne, PA, which has recently expanded its water gardens. From vast ponds, waterfalls and streams to giant lotuses galore, the dramatic ponds at Chanticleer are becoming show-stoppers all on their own.







A POOL OF INFORMATION

Forming the core of the water-garden area are four large ponds, a marshy area (which explodes with primroses in the spring) and a smaller waterfall pond on a hill overlooking the other water features.

"The largest and oldest pond here is the clay-lined one near the bottom of the slope, which is filled with lotuses," says Joe Henderson, who's in charge of Chanticleer's water features. "Then we had the middle pond installed a few years ago, and this one required a lot of soil mounded up along the edges because it sat out of the ground. I later designed the top pond and waterfall, which actually follows the lay of the land more. I prefer this kind of naturalistic look."

Indeed, these water gardens strike a fine balance between natural and more controlled approaches to garden design. The

Top: Black-eyed Susans provide a dramatic focal point next to one of the ponds. The original springhouse on the Chanticleer estate now houses the recirculating pumps.

Center: One of the large bottom ponds overflowing with the majestic lotus, 'Mrs. Perry D. Slocum'.

Bottom: A bridge over this stream has rails handcrafted by another Chanticleer horticulturist, Przemyslaw Walczak.

surrounding plantings are frequently reworked to achieve continuous color and pleasing masses of shape and texture from April to October, when Chanticleer closes for the season.

Around the edge of the ponds, for example, visitors can find everything from the rich purple blossoms of *Verbena bonariensis* to the enchanting pink *Penstemon* 'Schoenholzeri' and the grass-like leaves of Acorus, to super-tall perennials like *Aster tataricus* (Tatarian aster) and *Eupatorium maculatum* (Joe Pye weed).

In the water, one can find an enormous stand of giant lotuses, namely *Nelumbo* 'Mrs. Perry D. Slocum', which has large pink-white flowers that rise four feet from the pond's surface. Joe has also planted a number of choice waterlilies at Chanticleer. "I really like 'Texas Dawn', which has pale yellow flowers, and the deep pink 'James Brydon'. These are both hardy lilies," he notes.

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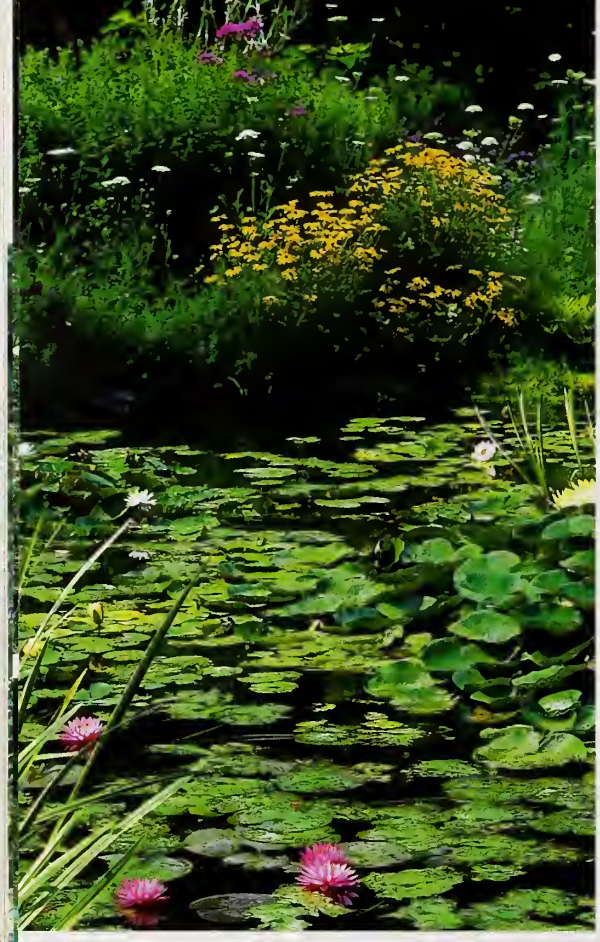
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Left: 'James Brydon' hardy waterlilies with black-eyed Susans in the background.

Below: A view of the pumps inside the springhouse.



A POOL OF INFORMATION

As in most water gardens, the engine of these ponds is a re-circulating pump, which takes water from the bottom pool to the waterfall at the top. There are three pumps hidden in a rustic stone springhouse, but Joe only actually uses one—the other two are for backup.

Interestingly, Joe does not use any filtration units. "We had one a few years ago, but I took it out," he recalls. "It really didn't do anything for us; we've installed plants to clean the water naturally. I think a UV filter would be fine if you wanted super-clear water to view koi, but we don't have that many fish—just a few perch, blue gill, crayfish, and albino rosies. The main attractions at our ponds are the plants and landscape."

At the very top of the water-garden area, a dramatic waterfall flows into a small pond surrounded by rocks, a sculpted face, and the striking red accent of *Lobelia cardinalis* (cardinal flower).

Using this as an example, Joe offers tips on the art of installing a successful waterfall feature: "Get the biggest stone possible to anchor the falls," he advises. "The one I used here is also partially buried, so it looks like a natural extension of the hillside. Otherwise, it would look like the waterfall is coming out of thin air.

"Finally, while big rocks are almost the main feature here, plants are important to soften the edges. A good selection of perennials, annuals, creeping rock-garden plants or ornamental grasses will really make your water garden come alive."

Right: All four ponds are interconnected. Seen here, they roll down the hill to a wetland area bordered by a stream.



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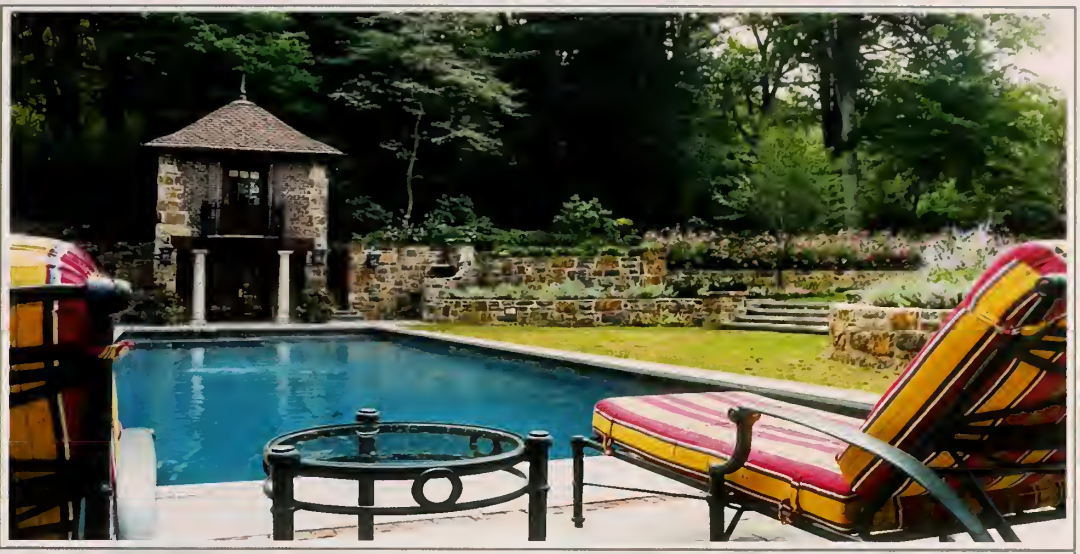
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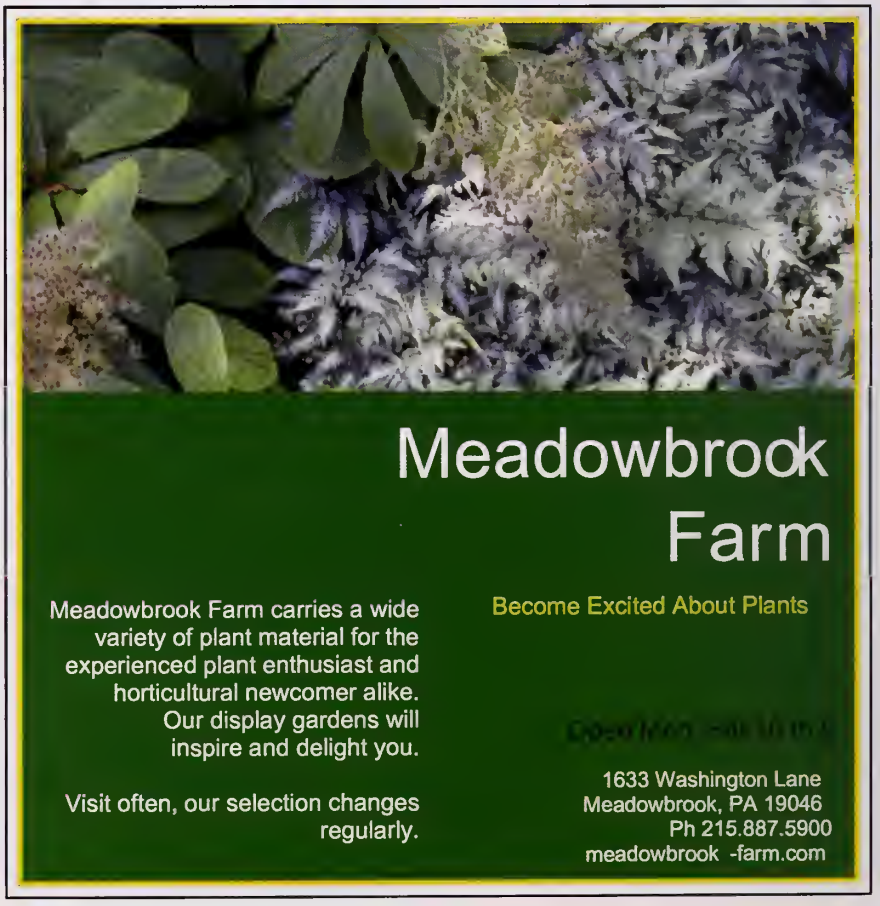
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When Plants are Home Alone

GARDENING INDOORS

by Ilene Sternberg

Do you fret over your plants when you leave town? Do you wish there were a plant kennel, like the trustworthy place you board Spot and Fluffy while you're gone? You could enlist a neighbor as surrogate guardian of the greenery, but unless you live next door to some guru from Logee's greenhouse, that often invites disaster.

If the plant sitter is a bit lazy, you'll likely return to desiccated devil's ivy and comatose crotons. If your entrusted friend is *too* conscientious, your zealously overwatered plants will be yellow, squishy, and beyond resuscitation before you can say *Sulcorebutia tiraquensis* v. *spinosior*. (Someone reported to me that while she vacationed, her father-in-law diligently watered *all* of her indoor plants...including silk flowers, Polyblend® palms, and a painted canvas banana tree). Yes, it's hard to get good help nowadays.

Several gimmicks and gadgets can keep plants comfy in your absence. Local garden centers sell some of these items, or you can rig up your own. Try self-watering pots, or insert a plant growing in a porous pot into a glazed one filled with enough water for the inner pot to absorb while you're gone. (Test for correct water amounts several weeks beforehand.)

"Water wicks" work, too. After watering, saturate a commercial water wick (a shoelace or clothesline works, too) and insert one end in the soil. Place the other in a large water receptacle, with plant pot sited below the level of the water source. Capillary action will slowly absorb and diffuse moisture into the soil for a week or two. There are also capillary mats that sit under your pots, water siphons with ceramic sensors that draw water from a reservoir, and a battery-operated pump device with timer that irrigates up to 10 plants for three months, according to Charley's Greenhouse & Garden catalog (800-322-4707, *charleysgreenhouse.com*).

Some vacationing gardeners advocate watering and moving plants to shade, then covering each one with a ventilated plastic bag attached snugly to the pot rim. Others advise putting plants in a bathtub lined with old moistened towels or bricks sitting in several inches of water. If you close the shower curtain and leave the lights on, you'll have created a makeshift greenhouse. Still others use Gro-lights along with their preferred watering strategies while they're off in Cancun, Spain or Vermont.

All tactics are dependent on individual plant requirements. African violets suffer the same fate as humans if plastic baggies are placed over their heads (put them on pebbles in a tray of water instead), while cacti couldn't care less if you left them all summer in full sun without a watering plan.

However, a green-thumbed buddy of mine, who ministers to hundreds of show-quality houseplants, can't be bothered with all of this folderol. She simply moves her plants out of sunlight, waters them thoroughly four days ahead, then again just before leaving, and has gone off for a month with no dire consequences.

If houseplants are summering outdoors, she rounds them all up into a shady spot and sets up an overhead sprinkler on a timer, programmed to water every two to three days. The sprinkler runs for about an hour, during which time deer, rabbits, and raccoons arrive with soap and towels to enjoy a nice refreshing shower before devouring the most succulent specimens for dinner. Well, no plan is perfect, I suppose.





Top: Water-wick system.

Bottom: A capillary mat.



Ilene Sternberg is an award-winning freelance writer who pens a gardening column for *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware.

First Impressions

by Jeff Jabco

Photos by Jeff Jabco







Suburbia was designed to be seen from a car, so many suburban homeowners design their gardens as seen from the street, forgetting what should be most important—the approach to the front door. Kris and Dan Benarcik have transformed the entrance of a pleasant, 1950s "cookie cutter" ranch house into a non-traditional but welcoming space. After moving to suburban Wilmington, Delaware in 2000, the Benarciks wasted no time in redesigning their property into one that suits their lifestyle and satisfies the "plant needs" for these two horticultural professionals.

Kris and Dan wanted screening from the street and a relatively low-maintenance entrance, since most of their gardening time is spent in the much more extensive rear garden. The front door is the primary entrance, so they designed for year-round interest with a focus on flowering in winter and early spring (1). The neighborhood is full of mature trees, and the front of this property is blessed with a tall white pine, native dogwood and red oak. These trees, as well as the slight slope away from the house and the southwest orientation, make growing most other plants difficult.

The Benarciks removed an existing entrance walk connecting the driveway to the narrow porch at the front door and replaced it with a 16-foot-diameter circle of flagstone edged with Belgian block cobbles (2). A brick sidewalk connects the flagstone circle to the driveway (3). A mixed planting bed at the far side of the front lawn echoes the circle of the terrace. This arrangement makes two strong design statements: **repetition** (curved lines) and **contrast** (circular terrace and curving beds contrast with the straight lines of the house, porch, driveway and street).

Plants surrounding the circular terrace must compete for moisture with an overhanging red oak. The Benarciks have chosen plants that come alive in late winter or remain interesting year-round, including drought-tolerant trees, shrubs, and herbaceous perennials, along with spring-flowering bulbs. Shadblow (*Amelanchier* sp.) and winter hazel (*Corylopsis spicata*) enclose the space and offer white and pale yellow blossoms, respectively, in early spring. Evergreen shrubs, *Mahonia japonica* 'Bealei' and *M. aquifolium*, bloom with bright yellow clusters of flowers in late winter. *Helleborus foetidus* is evergreen and offers chartreuse flowers through most of the winter, complementing a scattering of snowdrops.

In spring, *Euphorbia amygdaloides* var. *robbiae,* an evergreen groundcover, adds more chartreuse flower bracts, while purple-flowered *Viola labradorica* and white-to-pale-purple blossoms of *Phlox divaricata* 'May Breeze' complete the picture.

Kris and Dan admit that they spend little time on their entrance terrace, but they enjoy the subtle, creative beauty daily as they come and go. And for visitors, the first impression is a lasting one.

Jeff Jabco is the director of grounds and coordinator of horticulture at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.



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DEALING WITH DROUGHT

by Bill Thomas



Photos by Bill Thomas

Above: *Viburnum 'Pragense'*

Right: *Deutzia gracilis*

Drought in the Delaware Valley offers serious challenges. Too often, summer means water restrictions and wilted or dying plants, and we must spend precious hours hauling water buckets or hoses around our gardens. There is a temptation to let drought guide all our landscaping decisions, yet it's important to remember that we can and will have wet summers, too, so desert landscapes are not the answer. We need plants that tolerate both wet and dry conditions, and we need to know the requirements of the plants we grow.

We also need to understand the various microclimates of our gardens. South-facing hillsides are the driest and drain well, while shaded, flat areas hold onto water and dry out more slowly. Clay soil drains more slowly than sandy soils. Mulching greatly reduces the need for water. Long ago, I decided that nothing in my garden gets watered unless it is first mulched.

Some plants just cannot tolerate drought. *Hydrangea macrophylla*, large-leaved and famous for its pink and blue flowers, is one example. It's the first to wilt, signaling that other plants (such as recently transplanted ones) may need an extra drink. Plant these hydrangeas in shade where they will be easy to water by hand—and don't forget the mulch. I'm sometimes tempted to banish them from the garden, but they are so glorious in bloom (my favorite is *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Blue Billow'*) that I keep on growing them.

Boxwoods sit on the other end of the drought spectrum. Established plants of *Buxus sempervirens* (common box) and *Buxus microphylla* (littleleaf box) need no supplemental irrigation. They occur naturally on dry, south-facing hillsides, and the biggest danger for them in our region is flooding (remember those wet summers we occasionally have). Plant them in sun or shade where the soil drains well.

Even recently transplanted boxwoods are tough as nails. I moved seven last spring and rarely watered them. I'd like to say I was following drought restrictions, but actually I simply forgot about them, and not one died. (Don't try this with hydrangeas!)



My favorite boxwood is *Buxus sempervirens* 'Vardar Valley'.* It is pest resistant and has beautiful deep green foliage and a spreading habit, reaching 4 to 5 feet wide and 3 to 4 feet tall. Mine grow in dry shade under a ginkgo tree, surrounded by *Vancouveria hexandra*. An under-appreciated groundcover for dry shade, *Vancouveria* resembles its equally useful cousins, the epimediums. *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon', a surprisingly drought-tolerant, grass-like plant, adds a touch of yellow in another spot.

The shiny, narrow leaves of Prague viburnum (*Viburnum* 'Pragense') provide a background for its fragrant pink flowers in early May. It grows in sun or shade, reaching 6 to 8 feet tall and 4 feet wide. Mine grows under a Norway maple (the driest shade possible), next to Brandywine bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*) that bloom at the same time, creating a striking pink and blue combination.

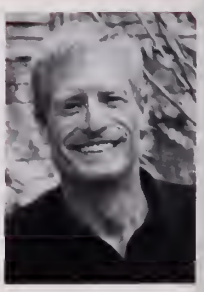
Another enticing juxtaposition I'd like to try is *Deutzia gracilis* 'Nikko'* under a grouping of Prague viburnum. 'Nikko' is one of the toughest shrubs for dry shade (it also tolerates sun). It reaches 18 inches in height and a width of 3 feet, produces a generous supply of white flowers, and thrives in all but flooded soils.

So while it's tempting to complain about our hot dry summers, we still have a great climate for growing a variety of plants. My advice? Work with your plants, placing them where they will thrive, and you won't have to spend so much time with a hose in your hand.

* PHS Gold Medal Award winner.

SOURCES

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Bill Thomas became the new executive director of Chanticleer in Wayne, PA on April 1st.

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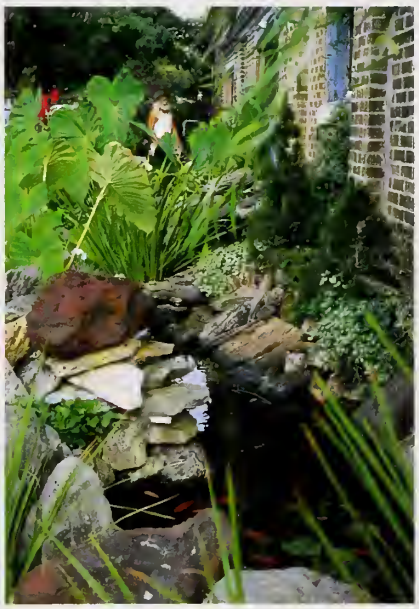


John Gannon

Top: Ed Elliss' duck pond.

Middle: A goldfish pond in Southwest Philly.

Bottom: Aspen Farms.



Suzanne Wheeling



Water features add something special to any garden. City gardeners—often working in small spaces or with restricted access to water—find all kinds of ingenious ways to bring water, with its soothing sights and sounds, into their lives. Here are a few examples from Philadelphia gardens.

Established in 1975, Aspen Farms, located in West Philadelphia's Mill Creek neighborhood, is one of Philadelphia's most successful and enduring community gardens. One of the garden's founding members, Hayward Ford, built two small ponds there in 1999.

Philadelphia Green later built a larger pond that connects to the other two, creating a lush, cooling environment that's a real haven for the neighborhood, especially in the summer heat. A rustic footbridge adds the finishing touch. Says Hayward, "For me, guiding the garden has been hard work, but a tremendously rewarding experience."

In Southwest Philadelphia, JoAnn Hardy and her husband Renaldo have three small ponds—complete with goldfish—on their corner lot at 55th Street and Willow Avenue. The ponds and the garden are built right on top of pavement. Renaldo used recycled stones to create a large raised area, then filled it with soil for gardening and installed plastic liners for the ponds. The garden was a first-place winner in the PHS City Gardens Contest last summer.

"The whole neighborhood appreciates it," says JoAnn. "People come by to have their wedding pictures taken here. One of our neighbors walks his grandson to school every day and they stop at the garden to see the fish. Once when the boy misbehaved, his punishment was that he didn't get to see the fish for a week. That straightened him out."

In the New Kensington community in eastern North Philadelphia—where Philadelphia Green has worked with residents to turn vacant land into gardens, parks, and sideyards—Ed Elliss has created his very own duck pond in the small yard beside his house. The pond is 5 feet deep and 15 feet wide, and is a spot that nearly a dozen "eider" ducks call home. Ed also has two smaller, pre-formed ponds stocked with fish. He dreamed up the watery paradise as a way to cut down on lawn space and the maintenance that goes along with it.

"I'm 66 years old, so I wanted something aesthetically pleasing that would require less work than the lawn did...or so I thought," he chuckles. He didn't envision what a huge splash the ducks would make with the neighbors. People regularly bring their children—and even their dogs—to gaze at the ducks. Adults are smitten, too. One woman comes by every single day to feed the ducks from a bag of cheese popcorn.

"My neighbors have all kinds of nicknames for them," says Ed. "They're really not *my* ducks anymore—they belong to the neighborhood."

—Jane Carroll

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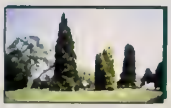
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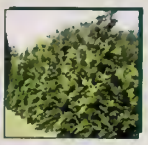
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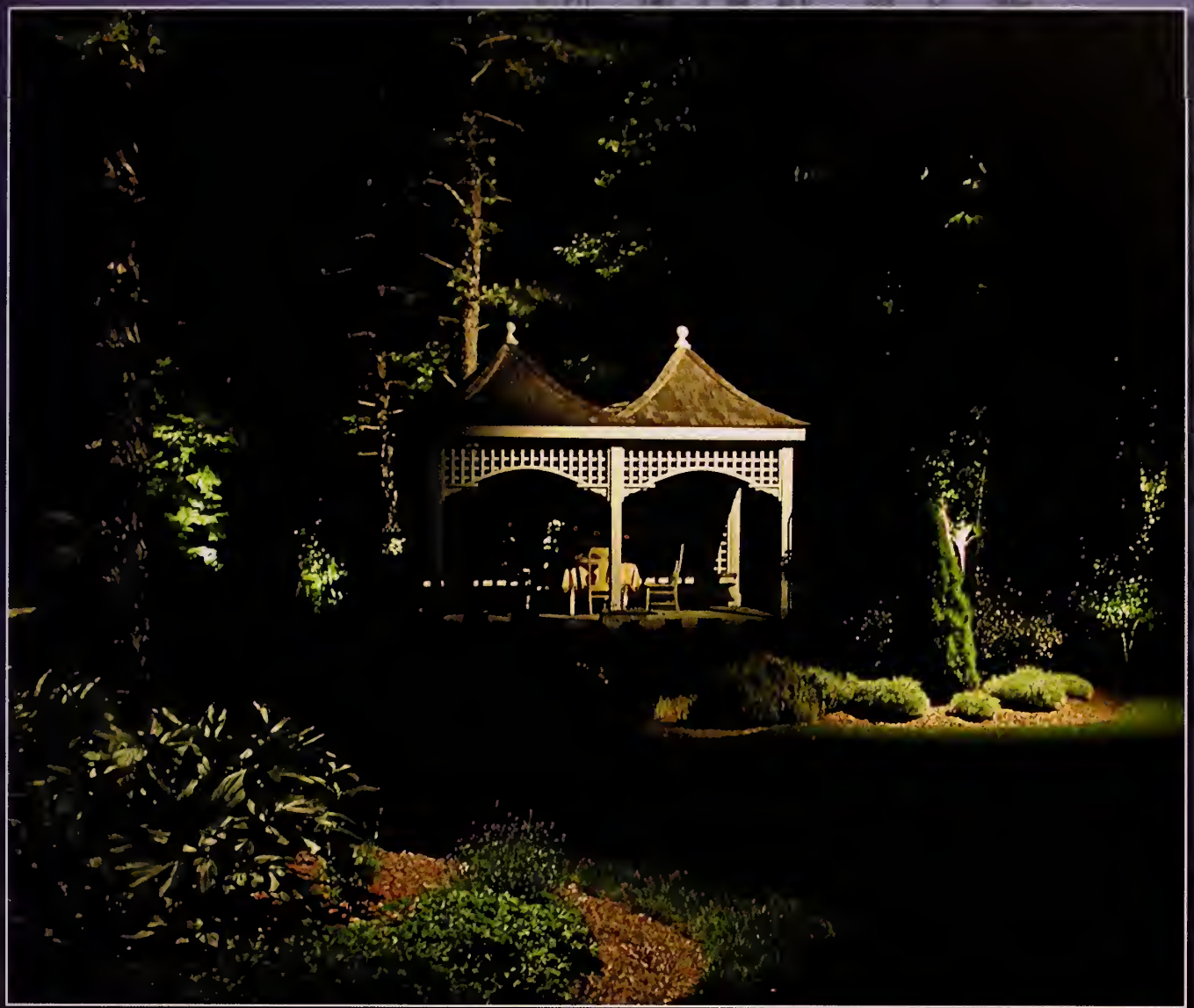
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Cover photos by Rob Cardillo, Harry Kalish and Pete Prown

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A Day in the Park

To many suburbanites, myself included, the word "park" conjures up images of state or local open spaces, which can encompass tens, hundreds or even thousands of acres of woodland and hiking trails. In Philadelphia, though, a park is a much different type of landscape—it can range from a once-vacant house lot dotted with a few shade trees and a bench, to multiple acres of land with playgrounds, ballfields and everything in between.

Urban parks fill a somewhat different need than their suburban counterparts. Whereas the suburban residential tract is designed to essentially be its own "mini-park" (lawn, trees, ornamental shrubs and flowers), city dwellers often reside in apartments and rowhomes, so the desire for "green space" becomes that much more urgent. More than a substitute front yard, urban parks can also function as community centers and a peaceful retreat from the bustle of urban living.

I was fortunate to visit a few city parks this past April when PHS put on its annual Philadelphia Green "Spring Into Your Park" day. Each April, PHS's Parks department helps organize cleanups in nearly 50 community parks across the city, recruiting legions of volunteers. I was assigned to a few parks in West Philadelphia, and, as I quickly learned, each city park is different, with varying assets and problems to address.

Two of the parks I visited were Clark Park and Connell Park. Clark Park is located at 43rd Street & Baltimore Avenue, a diverse neighborhood in University City. Here, the cleanup was sponsored by the Friends of Clark Park, an energetic group that contacted local volunteers, brought tools to the event and even provided coffee and snacks. (Volunteer axiom #1: bring donuts and the people will come.)

About a dozen volunteers showed up while I was there and eagerly began picking up trash and pulling weeds. On the other side of the park, a kids' soccer game was in progress, while other area residents were walking their dogs. If you panned your eyes across the vista, you could instantly take in the spectrum of Clark Park's use—a place for children, families, and residents to play and relax, as well as for volunteers who occasionally give a Saturday morning to help keep it clean and tidy. It was a very positive scene to behold.

Later, I went to Connell Park in southwest Philadelphia, which is a new addition to PHS's parks fold. Located off Woodland Avenue, Connell is comprised of several acres of open lawn, along with a few trees and playground equipment in the middle.

At this Spring Into Your Park event, two adults were joined by a bevy of enthusiastic kids to clean up the park. The group leaders, Jameal Cuffy and Ronald Hines (see photo top left), were directing the youngsters to sweep here and there, and spruce up the place even more. Jameal pointed out a three-year-old pulling a large plastic trashcan across the grass to help out. The toddler was clearly happy to be outside and working alongside "the big kids."

Especially touching was Jameal and Ronald's commitment to this park. Both men spoke about striving to be positive role models for the kids and teaching them to take care of their environment. Ronald also said he didn't want these children to have the same rough upbringing he did, so he was out here every day to supervise. "I just want to do my part," he said, humbly. It was quite inspiring.

It was also inspiring for my 14-year-old son Max, who accompanied me on this day. Driving to Connell Park through some of West Philly's more blighted neighborhoods was clearly an eye opener for this suburban teenager. At the end of the day, he even suggested that we come back for Philadelphia Green's autumn event, "Fall For Your Park," where hundreds of volunteers descend on one city park for a massive clean-up and restoration.

It was at this moment that I saw how city parks can be important even to those who don't live in the neighborhood. In one way or another, Philadelphia's parks benefit everyone in the region.

Pete Brown

email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*

heavenly hydrangeas

DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS, perhaps the hydrangeas are what most merit a visit to the Scott Arboretum. In all, more than 70 different types of hydrangeas grow on Swarthmore's lush campus-arboretum. While most are congregated in an area along the north entrance drive, many more are incorporated into gardens, demonstrating how effectively hydrangeas combine with other shrubs, trees, and perennials to create distinctive plantings.

Hydrandia serrata "Jogasaki"



Story by Claire Sawyers
Photographs by Pete Prown

As I reflect on the diversity of hydrangeas at Scott, I realize that I have more kinds of hydrangeas than any other genus of woody plant in my own small, home garden. I inherited an old, small, tree-like ***Hydrangea paniculata***, whose flowering panicles spill over the railing of the front porch until I harvest them to dry for winter arrangements. There is a still-young ***H. aspera*** with large velvety leaves that are as attractive as its wide, flat circle of bluish fertile flowers ringed with white sterile flowers. I tucked it into the front bed with a mix of perennials and shrubs.

An unknown ***H. macrophylla*** came with the garden. Its intense blue balls of all sterile flowers never blended with my purple-and-rose color scheme. For several years my solution was to cut all the flowering stems off and make bodacious bouquets out of them. But that one shrub stole the show to such an extent that finally, after marveling at its punch for years, I took it out. In a bigger garden, I might have found a place for it to carry on its dramatic performance.

Back at the Scott Arboretum, there are **oakleaf hydrangeas** (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) in the Nason Garden, which was designed to emphasize plant textures. There, the big bold leaves of the oakleaf contrast dramatically with the linear, fine foliage of the groundcover beneath it, *Liriope spicata*. I also grow oakleaf hydrangeas at home—this is one plant that I never want to live without. A southeastern native, it offers something pleasing in every season: orange flaky bark and dried flower heads in the winter; dramatic leaves with white felty hairs on the back that unfurl in spring; big, beautiful creamy white flower clusters in the summer; and wine-colored foliage in the fall.

A pair of 'Annabelle' cultivars—a superb selection of **smooth hydrangea** (*H. arborescens*) with profuse white balls of flowers—flank the stone piers on my bungalow's front porch and create an exuberant entrance during the heat of summer. In Scott's Cosby Courtyard, *H. macrophylla* 'Nigra', with its eggplant-purple stems, consorts with plants in a purple-and-chartreuse color scheme. Its pink flowers with red flower stalks fading to mauve are an added bonus in the garden.

A **climbing hydrangea** (*Hydrangea petiolaris*) clings to the face of the Wister Greenhouse. This beautifully behaved vine can make even the most mundane masonry

look charming. At home, my climbing hydrangea covers a large section of the stockade fence enclosing my back garden. It begins displaying delicate flower clusters—the size of dinner plates—at the end of May.

Hydrangeas are mixed into nearly every garden at the Scott Arboretum and nearly every part of my home garden because, in addition to offering diverse and beautiful displays, they are easy to grow, relatively problem-free and adaptable. They perform well in sun or part shade, and they still bloom well in shade, making them popular here in the Mid-Atlantic region, with its prevalence of shady gardens.

Hydrangeas generally grow best in rich, well-drained moist soil, but they are tough once established. In the extreme drought of 2002, the hydrangea collection flagged but very few, if any, were lost, while scores of rhododendrons, leucothoes, and mountain laurels suffered severe die-back or outright death. A native of Japan, *H. macrophylla* has fleshy, leathery leaves that even tolerate salt spray; hence it's a popular plant in seaside and coastal gardens.





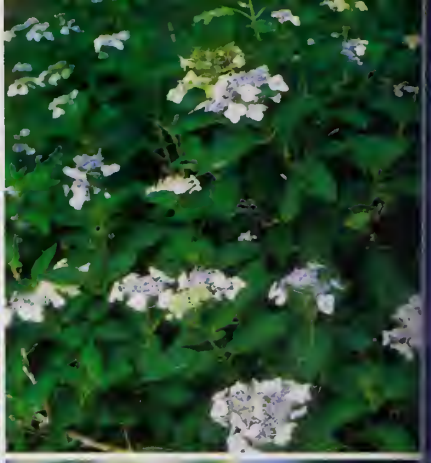






Clockwise from top:
Hydrangea petiolaris
H. macrophylla 'Nigra'
H. aspera
H. quercifolia (oakleaf hydrangea)
H. arborescens 'Hills of Snow'







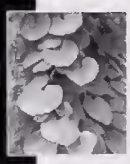
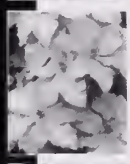
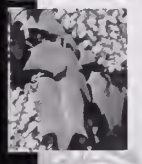
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Hydrangeas are easy to maintain, too, requiring only a little pruning. There may be winter twig die-back and ratty remnants of flower clusters on hydrangeas such as *Hydrangea arborescens* and *H. macrophylla* cultivars. Give them a spring cleaning by cutting out the dead twigs and old flowers. Spent flowers of oakleaf hydrangeas and the panicle hydrangea will also hang on into spring and should be pruned. Some gardeners take the stems of *arborescens* 'Annabelle' to the ground, which produces a fountain of new stems and a spectacular display of summer flowers. (Flowers are produced on current season's wood so no flower buds are lost.) Some say pruning them that hard contributes to lax stems that flop from the weight of the flower heads. If that's a concern, try a less-drastic early spring pruning.

One of the mysteries of hydrangeas is how cultivars of the bigleaf hydrangea (*H. macrophylla*), sometimes bloom pink, sometimes blue. This is determined by soil acidity. In acidic soils (pH lower than 5.5) the flowers are blue, in neutral soils (pH above 6) the flowers are pink. In between,

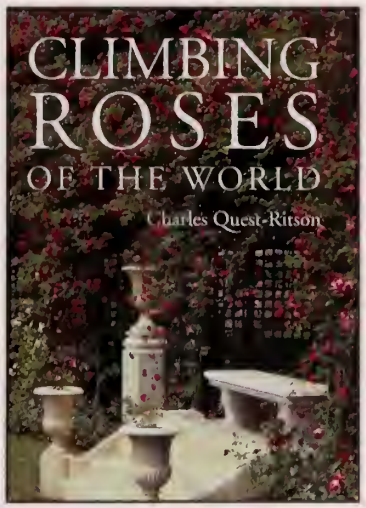
Clockwise from top left:
H. macrophylla 'Alpengluhen'
H. arborescens 'Annabelle'
H. paniculata 'Unique'
H. macro 'White Wave'
H. macrophylla 'Blue Billow'

some cultivars even produce mauve flowers.

With their ease of culture and diversity of form—from small shrubs to small tree-like forms to vines—and their diversity of blooms—from big balls of all sterile flowers (hortensia types) to delicate lacy domes ringed with a single row of sterile flowers (lace cap hydrangeas) to frothy panicles—it's understandable why several hydrangeas have been recognized by PHS's Gold Medal Plant Award program. These include *H. arborescens* 'Annabelle'; *H. quercifolia* 'Snow Queen', a cultivar with particularly dense flower clusters; and *H. macrophylla* 'Blue Billow', a lace cap inflorescence with rich blue sterile flowers.

So come and compare hydrangeas at the Scott Arboretum. You are bound to go home with a list of cultivars you'll want to add to your garden.

Claire Sawyers has been the director at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College since 1990. For more information on hydrangeas, visit *www.goldmedalplants.com*



Climbing Roses of the World

By Charles Quest-Ritson

(Timber Press, 306 pages, $34.95)

After a decade of intensive research taking him throughout Europe, Australia and the United States, Charles Quest-Ritson has finally completed his latest book, a truly comprehensive study of the world's climbing and rambling roses. Little did he realize what an enormous task he had set before himself, but his efforts paid off. The book now promises to stand as the definitive treatment for years to come.

Quest-Ritson has grouped the roses into classifications according to their botanical characteristics. He describes in detail the work of many of the world's leading rose breeders. A polyglot, Quest-Ritson went right to the original sources in a half dozen languages, checking old catalogs, breeders notes, correspondence, and books, and gradually piecing together the historical development of all the climbing and rambling roses growing around the world today.

The book, covering 1,600 roses, explores in detail the Chinese Synstylae and other species, *Rosa gigantea*, *Rosa chinensis*, the Ayrshire and evergreen roses, *Rosa setigera* and the hardy Boursault roses. Of course he gives space to the *Rosa multiflora* that has played such a big part in breeding programs. A whole chapter is dedicated to "Turner's 'Crimson Rambler' Race" and another entirely to Wichurana hybrids. 'New Dawn' and its descendants, which have so influenced today's climbing roses, have been grouped together. And the author dedicates another chapter to the Kordesii hybrids, which were highlights of 20th-century breeding breakthroughs.

Quest-Ritson includes a chapter of climbing sports, as detailed as that on large-flowered climbers. He ends the book with a brief and very encouraging chapter on the cultivation of climbing roses, followed by a glossary and extensive bibliography. There are 200 color plates.

Though the volume is packed with information, Quest-Ritson writes with such clarity and ease that the book is hard to put down. It belongs on every gardener's bookshelf.

—Helene Pizzi, PHS member
(Rome, Italy)



"Forget not Mee & My Garden . . ." Selected Letters of Peter Collinson, F.R.S.

Edited by Alan W. Armstrong

(American Philosophical Society, 300 pages, $60)

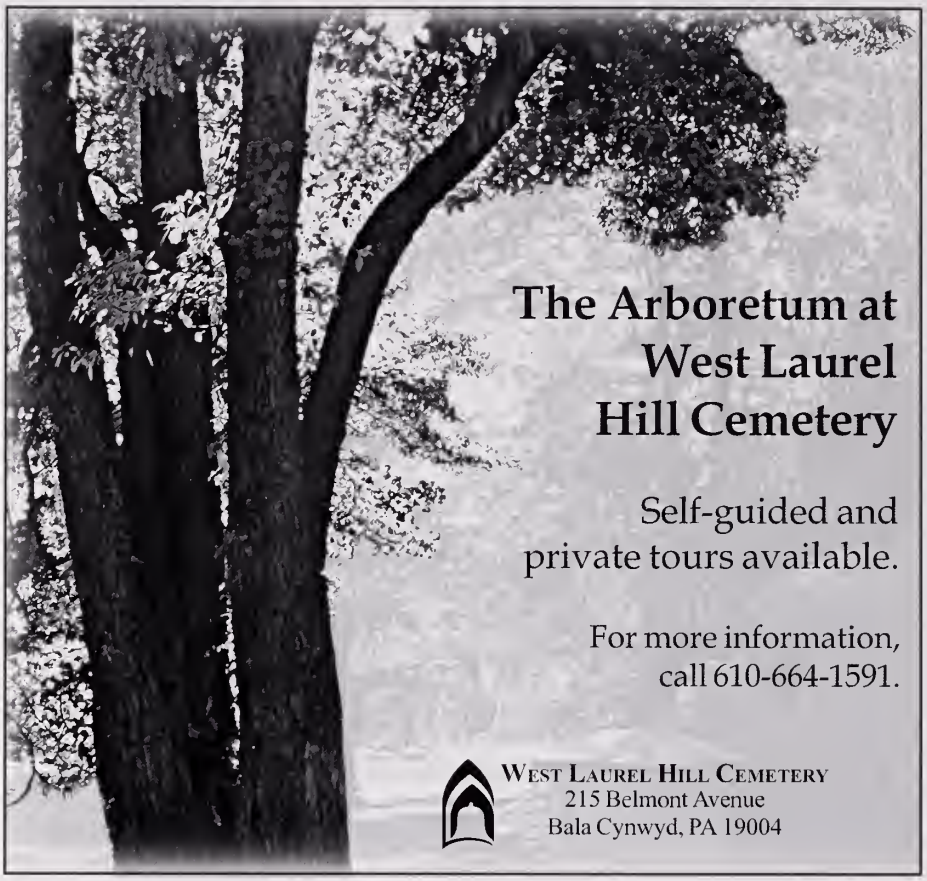
I've always enjoyed epistolary novels—the possibility of moving action forward though letters appeals to a life-long paper pusher like myself. *Forget not Mee & My Garden* chronicles the movement of goods and ideas over a lifetime of energetic investigation of the natural world. Peter Collinson was a London fabric merchant and a collector of all kinds of flora and fauna. He sent and received plants, seeds, books and curiosities along with fabric from London to

ports around the world, most particularly North America, a place that fascinated him. The letters were entrusted to ship captains for safe delivery.

The leading scientists and enthusiasts of the day were his correspondents. The book includes letters to Carl Linnaeus on all kinds of topics, to Benjamin Franklin on electricity and "thundergusts," and very chummy ones to John Bartram, with instructions on what Collinson wanted him to send—not just seeds and fruits, but birds, insects, deer horns, roots, and so forth: *"Mr Catesby Desires that thou wilt Look after a night bird call'd Wipper-Will",* he wrote. He also gave detailed instructions on how to prepare the specimens: *"If this can be shot & sent in its Feathers being first Boweled & dried in a slack oven, & then Tied up in tobacca leaves."* In all, the book contains 192 letters to 27 people, which the editor selected from the more than 750 letters that survive.

Contemporary illustrations complement the letters. There are reproductions of serious oil painting of important folk, interesting maps hand drawn by Bartram on his collecting expeditions, gorgeous botanicals, and inadvertently hilarious depictions of mammals. Explanatory text helps set the stage and identify the players; footnotes further elucidate the events and people referred to in the letters. This is a thoroughly engaging trip to a world of people passionately absorbed in the task of understanding nature and its inhabitants.

—Nancy O'Donnell







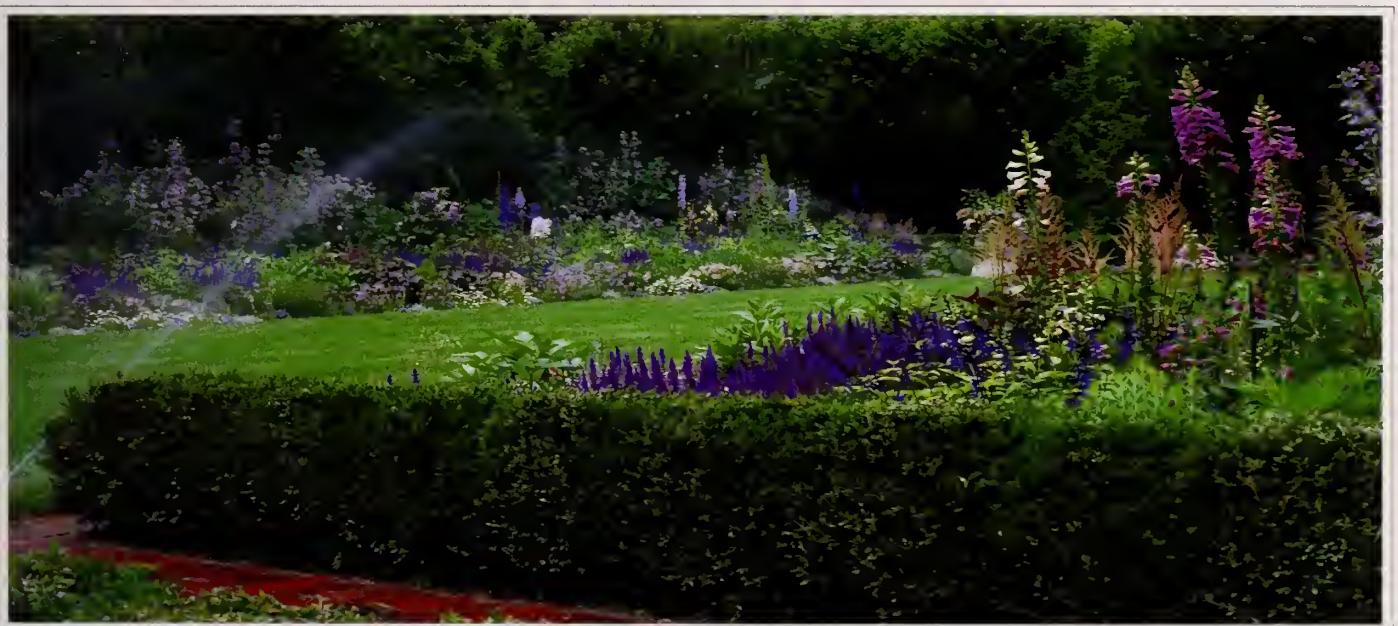
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Lessons

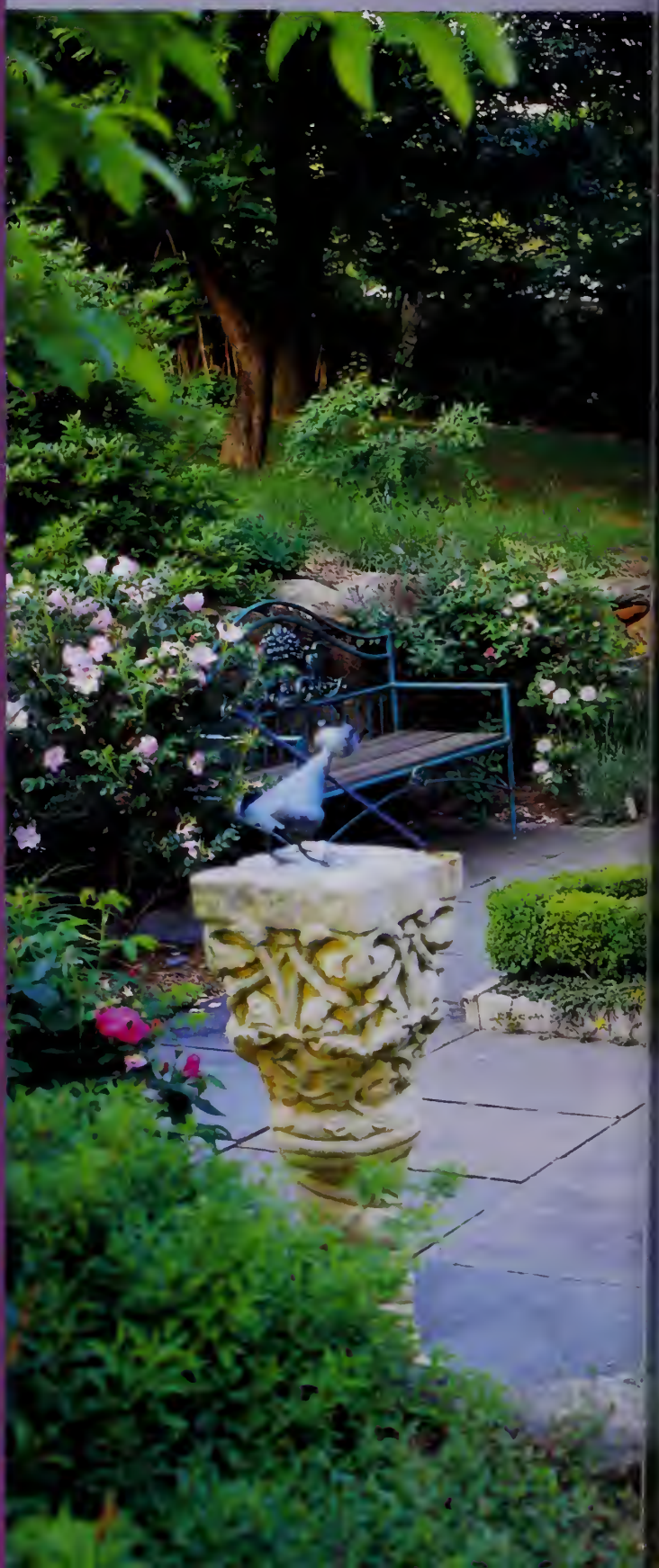
A Horticultural Gem in Wilmington, Delaware.

Story by Ilene Sternberg
Photography by Rob Cardillo

What do you get when you cross an MD with latent engineering skills and a biochemist with an unusual artistic bent? Among other things, you get an outstanding garden, inspiring by anyone's standards.



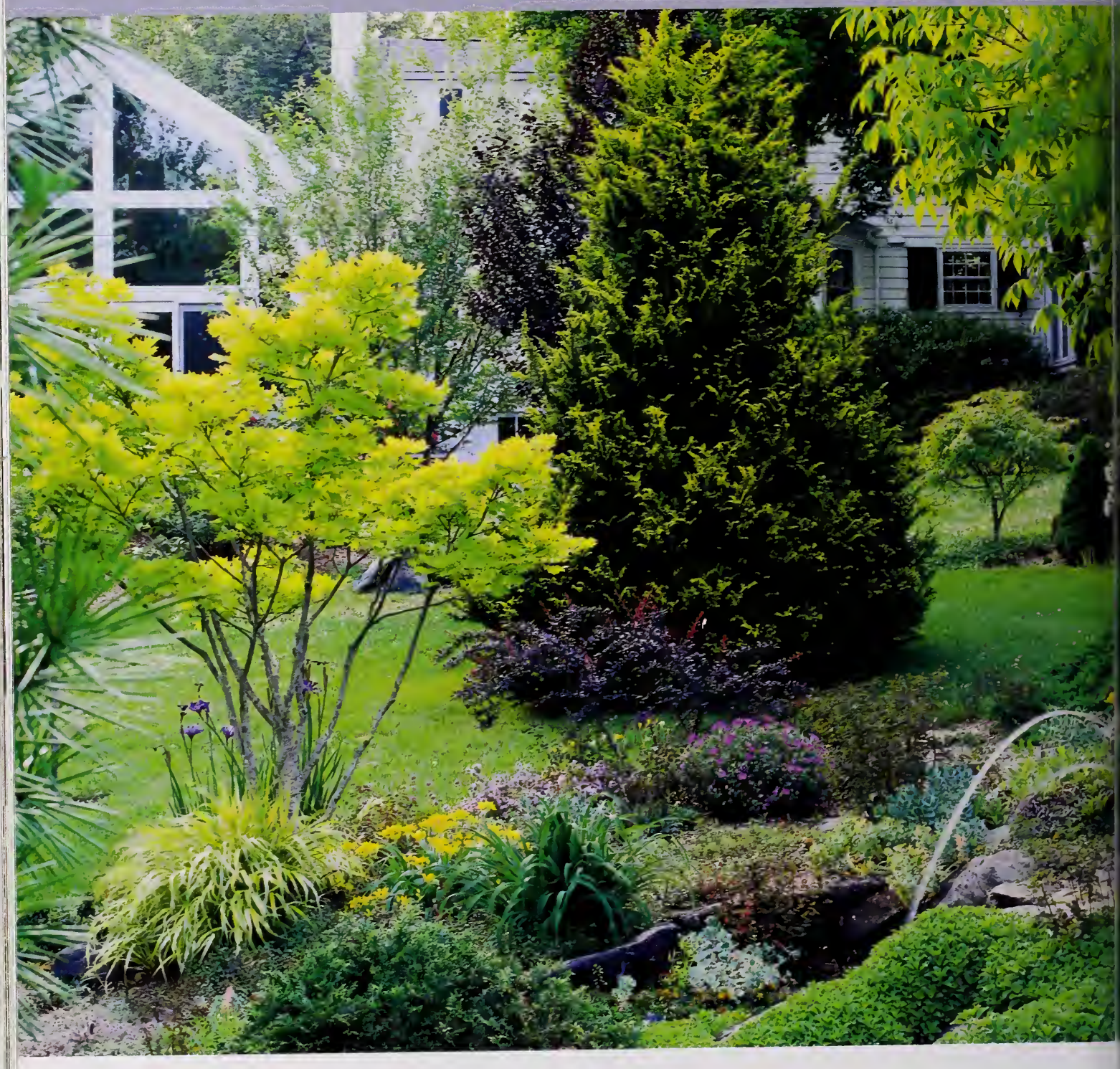
Eve Thyrum at home.



from the Garden

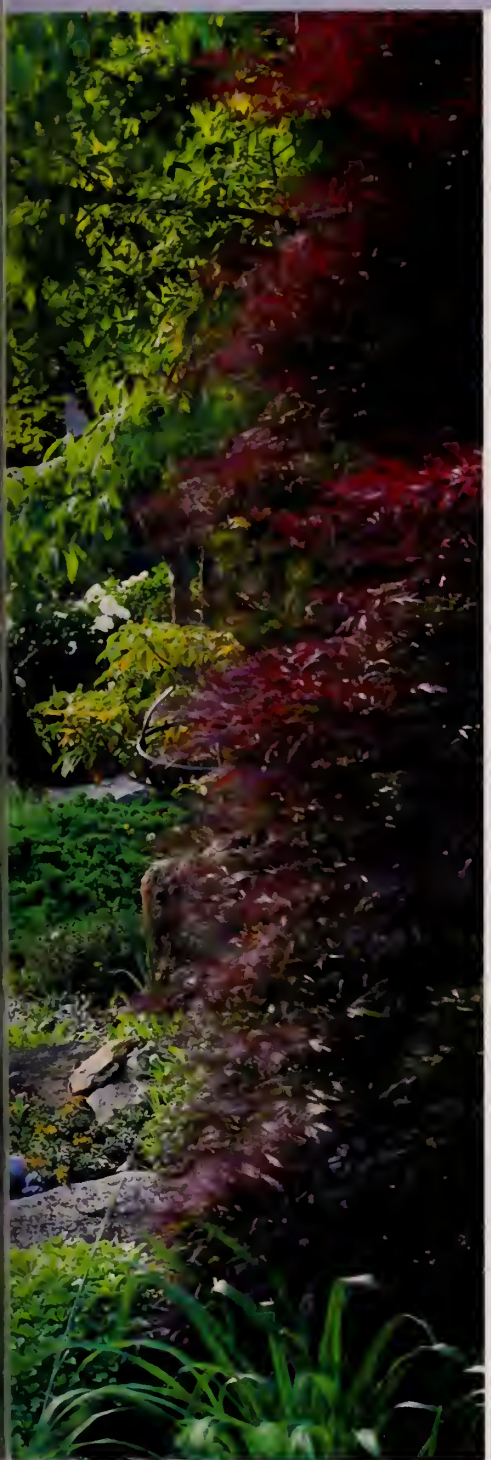


Lessons from the Garden



Above right: *Sagina subulata* (Irish moss), two varieties in a single container.

The standards are high indeed at Frog Hollow, the Wilmington, Delaware garden where Eve and Per Thyrum work their particular magic. Eve, a retired scientist and the daughter of two accomplished artists, is the plants person, overseer of all things horticultural. Husband Per, a soon-to-be-





retired research director with a large pharmaceutical company, is chief administrator of hardscaping, pond development, tree-climbing and excavation on their 2-acre property. Both are ambitious, resolute, and tireless. Both are perfectionists. Both are high spirited, optimistic, and excruciatingly cheerful—you know, the kind of people you'd love to hate but can't because you really hope some of their talent and *joie de vivre* will rub off on you if you hang around them long enough.

Frog Hollow garden is one of the highlights of Wilmington Garden Day each May and has tours running through it all year long, including groups from the Smithsonian Institution, the Garden Club of America, and PHS. The collection of woody plants is so impressive that horticulture students go there to take plant identification tests.

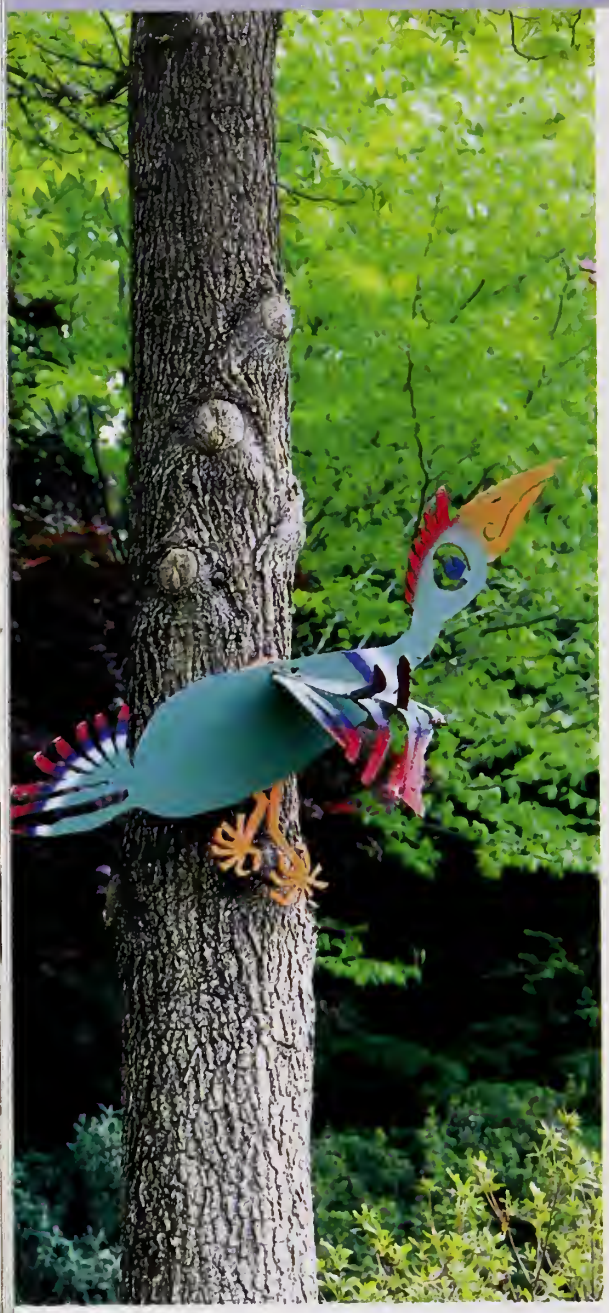
Although the Thyrums spare no expense on their garden—since they virtually live in their little Eden barring weather extremes—they generally prefer to do all the labor themselves. Eve carefully places select cultivars according to their cultural requirements, building a garden area and adding a few well-chosen ornaments. As things grow, the garden and its design evolve. (Lesson: A garden is ever-changing. Plan well and plan to revise your plan often. Be flexible.)

Meticulous about labeling, Eve is a stickler for correct botanical nomenclature. No "cobbity twinkybells" in her beds. She respects her plants and feels they deserve to be addressed by their proper Latin names. She's equally scrupulous about keeping lawn and beds weed-free, neatly edged, and tidily tamed. No spent flowers. No blighted leaves. The mere mention of an invasive plant elicits a visible shiver. As a result, the garden is enviably impeccable. (Lesson: Keep a weed from going to seed and you've got a fighting chance at a well-groomed garden.)

Eve also keeps exhaustive records of every plant's purchase date, price, origin, and garden location, along with its photo. If one is ever kidnapped, she'll have clear evidence the Plant Police can use to recapture it or put its picture on a milk carton.

With her green thumb and forefinger, Eve planted a seed a neighbor gave her 20 years ago. It's now a 50-foot deodar cedar.

Lessons from the Garden



Offbeat ornaments add humor to the dramatic plantings at Frog Hollow.

Nowadays she has no time to waste with tiny plants if she can start with a large one, and no patience for sickly specimens. One reason her garden looks so fresh is that she ruthlessly routs anything that performs poorly.

Per's passion is rock relocation. If there's a boulder to be moved—the larger and heftier the better—he's got his come-along, pulleys, skids, wheelbarrow, and chains ready for the operation. Consequently, the couple's landscape includes stone formations and arrangements, most of which were unearthed from the rock-ridden, overgrown orchard they inherited when they bought their home.

I've seen Per build a pond on his lunch hour. He has conceived, constructed and maintains at least seven water features, not counting the occasional flooded basement. Some have fish; one has a "froggy flume ride." Another has a misting element to satisfy a bog garden. He also does pretty nifty metal sculpture and woodwork, including a dovecote with copper cupola fit for the haughtiest and most discerning of doves. And he designed the large, prize-winning conservatory/library, rewiring and redoing the work as it progressed when construction wasn't "just so." (Note: Per loads up on vitamins each morning.)

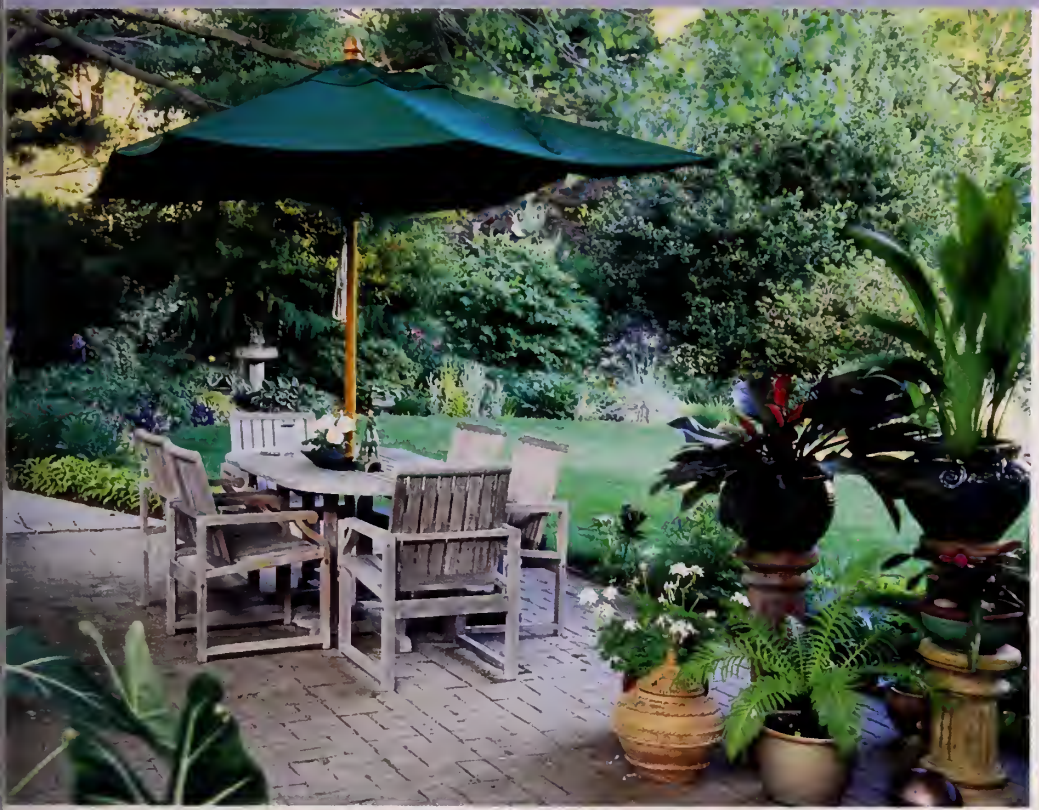
The diligent duo works independently and together just as often and as amicably, not easy when two people tend the same spot of land. Pruning is a shared effort. Limbing up trees is another lesson I learned from the Thyrums. Even an ordinary *Euonymus alata* becomes a flaming fall spectacle as a 10-foot-tall "tree."

When it comes to garden equipment, the Thyrum household rivals Home Depot in inventory, including weird, obscure, but surprisingly useful supplies. (This makes Eve and Per extremely popular with their neighbors.) They have just the perfect wrench, screw, gadget and gewgaw for any purpose.

Once I caught Eve running out the door to go shopping. "Going to the mall?" I guessed foolishly. "We're going out to look for a cement











Clockwise from top left:

Phormium and *Ipomea* in a container

Patio table with umbrella and containers

Terra cotta pots used as ornaments

The Thyrums' garden library

mixer," she answered. Their latest toy is a golf cart for hauling stuff and ferrying dinner items to the gazebo when entertaining. Hand-carrying service for 30—silverware, glassware, china, etc.—two acres up- and downhill can take its toll even on this couple.

There are numerous seating areas in the garden, and despite the fact that the indefatigable owners seemingly work from dawn 'til dusk, they do take time to sit at one time or another in every spot, relaxing for meals or planning their next move over a cold beer. (Observation: There's no point in having a garden unless you take time to stop and smell the *Rosa pimpinellifolia* var. *altaica*.)

Owing to the Thyrums' fortitude, enthusiasm, and imagination, there is never a time when some new project is not afoot. For example, a new garden of unusual plants that few have dared try in Zones 6 and 7, as well as a hardy cactus garden are now underway. There are woodland walks, sunny borders, and an herbal knot garden, yet all are so artfully arranged that a peaceful, relaxed atmosphere pervades the whole landscape.

The Thyrums' pleasure ground is a labor of love—more aptly, an obsession. Step onto their shady patio, every brick of which they laid themselves, listen to the trickle of the water into the pools, and your blood pressure will drop by 15%; it's AMA approved. The garden is also a registered wildlife sanctuary. New animals are signing up at the registry every day.

Final lesson from Eve and Per: A joyous nature, lots of muscle, flair, imagination, and dedication are the secret ingredients of a truly inspiring garden. Lacking those virtues, I'm content to just stop by and admire.

VOICES of Philadelphia Green

A Visual Essay

Throughout Philadelphia's downtown area and neighborhoods, city residents have teamed up with PHS's Philadelphia Green program and dedicated themselves to creating vibrant gardens, parks, and other dynamic open spaces, often from the rubble of long-neglected land. Using words and pictures, let's take a look at the meaningful partnerships Philadelphia Green continues to forge across the city.





"I knew I needed a **hobby** to keep me busy and **get me out of the house**, and here was this big eyesore across the street—the perfect place to **start a garden.**"

—James Taylor, talking about the dilapidated site that became Glenwood Green Acres community garden



"The key to the future of Aspen Farms and other community gardens is to engage younger folks in taking a more active leadership role."

—Hayward Ford,
Aspen Farms community garden,
West Philadelphia





"The **PARTNERSHIP** with **PHILADELPHIA GREEN** became an organizing tool to increase **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT."**

—Rose Gray,
Asociación de Puertorriqueños en Marcha,
a community organization in eastern North Philadelphia

"The garden was a starting point. It brought people together and was a visible sign and message that we are a community."

—Amy Hooper,
Hamilton Ridge Garden
(north of Chinatown)

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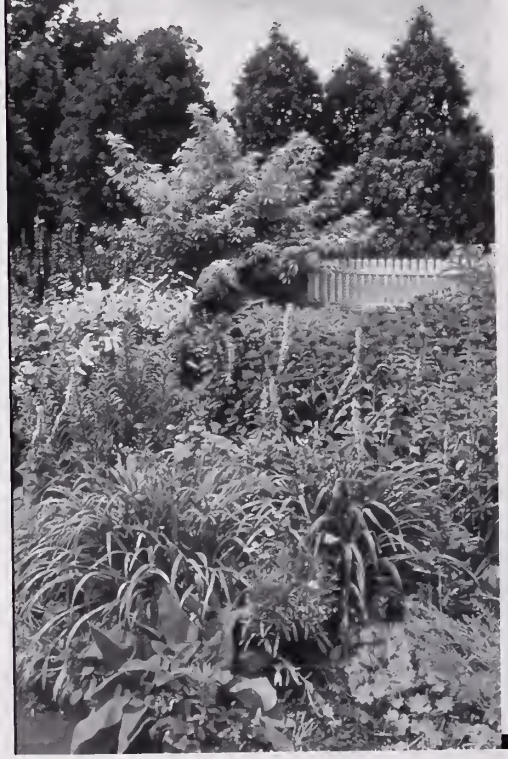
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VOICES

"The vacant land had impacted people on a spiritual level. There was not only the physical effect of abandoned land, but the community felt abandoned as well."

—Paul Malvey, director of land management for the New Kensington Community Development Corporation

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"It's like when you put a fresh coat of paint on your house—it makes all the difference."

—Roy Koehler, on the impact the remade lot at Penn Street & Oxford Avenue has had on the Frankford community.

Philadelphia Green

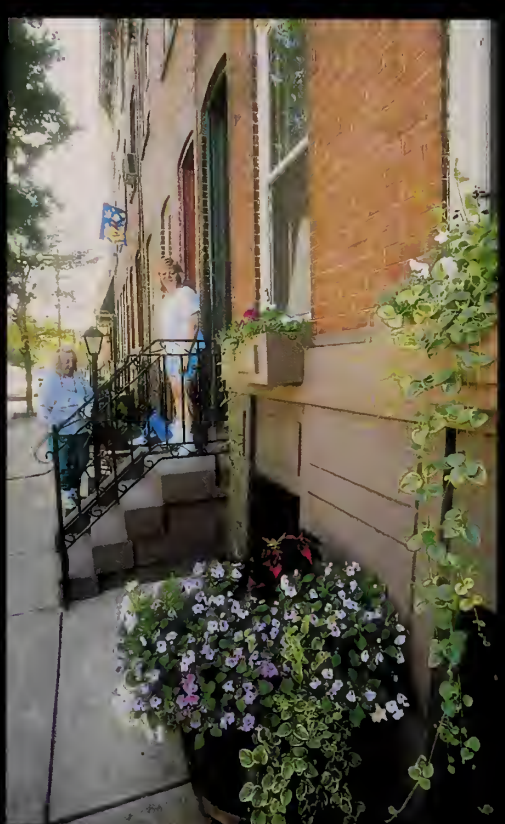
"I BEGAN TO REALIZE THAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS REALLY DETERIORATING. AND I THOUGHT, 'I'M NOT A KID ANYMORE. I SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.'"

—John Boyce, on his efforts to help revitalize his Roxborough community and Gorgas Park.



"People have more pride, the streets are clean, and the neighbors are out talking to each other more than in the past."

—Resident Paula Hurdey, on the effects of greening in the New Kensington community.





"Working at the *Azalea Garden* is a volunteer *job I love*—one I don't want to give up. It's something I *really look forward to.*"

—Lee Gutman, Friends of the Azalea Garden



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—Sharon Turner, Philadelphia Green Advisory Board member, on the impact of gardening and greening

Philadelphia Green





"The ACT OF CARING for TREES has helped bring our community together. NEIGHBORS are getting to KNOW EACH OTHER and building relationships or re-establishing old ones."

—Susan Petrone,
South Philadelphia Tree Tenders

In my **class**, the kids with handicaps often come out to the **teaching garden** more than the other youngsters. Because they have more experience in the garden, they often **learn more**, and they can turn around and teach the others – it's very **empowering experience** for them."

—Teacher Larry Stier of Vare Middle School

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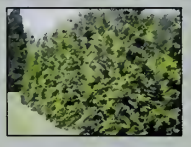
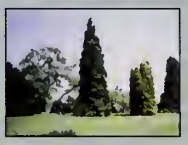
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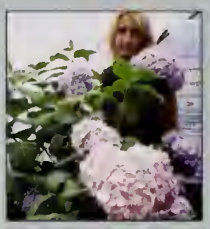
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The above 3 pictures were taken at the US National Arboretum in Washington D.C in August of 2001. When planted in the Fall of 1998, they were 3 feet tall and planted on 6 1/2 foot centers. They grew 3 feet the first year (1999), and are now 10 to 12 feet tall. It can be trimmed to any height or width to create the ultimate natural or formal hedge.

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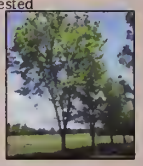




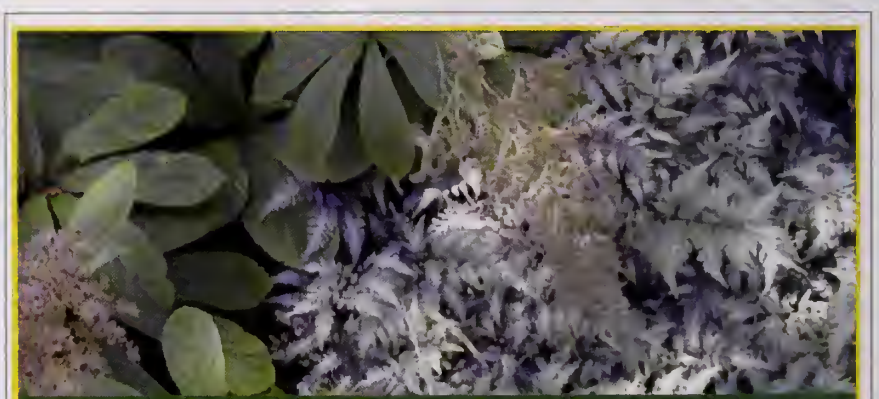
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Mastering Asters



Pete Prown

A Short Overview of this Late-Summer Charmer

Story by Patricia A. Taylor

Asters are known as the "gems of the fall garden." To those who are fans of their beauty and adaptability, they are also luminaries in many a summer garden as well. Ask me about them and I'll blather on incessantly. Knowing this, the editor of *Green Scene* has restricted me to discussing no more than 10 cultivars. What a frugal editor he is!

With that caveat, come join me in a brief exploration of this wonderful genus. It has over 250 members, represented on every continent except Australia and Antarctica. Most asters, however, are native to North America, and this article is limited to them. Of the natives, the New York (*A. novi-belgii*) and the New England (*A. novae-angliae*) are the most popular.

I won't dwell on the New York aster, which was one of the first native plants shipped overseas. British breeders delighted in its short, 2- to 3-foot-tall stature and dark green leaves, and created hundreds of cultivars. These plants—in colors ranging from white to rosy pink to deep purple and bearing names such as Bonningdale, Crimson Brocade, and Violet Carpet—invariably soak up mildew and root rot, as well as attract spider mites and other pests. Plant them in an organic garden and they will either eventually die or wind up looking like an ugly mess.

I have nothing but praise, on the other hand, for the 12-inch-tall hybrids created from the New York aster and a little known aster with the common name of rice-button aster (*A. dumosus*). Two of these hybrids have thrived in my organic Princeton, New Jersey borders for 10 years with nary a sign of disease or insect attack. They are perfect for front border displays.

Little 'Alice Haslam' is my favorite. In 1999, it outdid itself when its deep pinkish red flowers bloomed from mid-July through mid-October. In one open area, I paired 'Alice Haslam' with the ruby pink flowers of poppy mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*) and the effect was just stunning. Alas, the rabbits also appreciated this combination; the following year, they ate both plants to the ground.

I managed to salvage a clump of 'Alice Haslam' and transplanted it among some coral bells (*Heuchera sanguinea*) and the low-growing 'Petite Delight' monarda (*M. didyma* × *M. fistulosa*). Packed in among these plants, it has eluded rabbit plundering. Because of the tight growing conditions and the subsequent lack of full sun, 'Alice Haslam' now only blooms for one late-summer month.

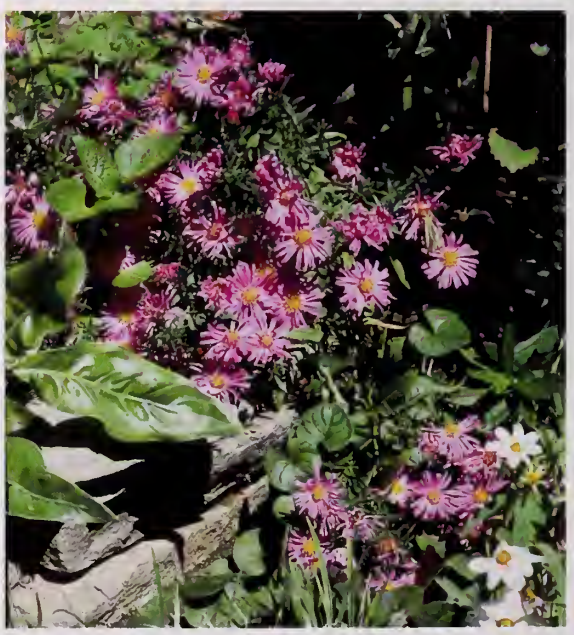
'Prof. Kippenberg' (with the full, rarely listed name of 'Professor Anton Kippenberg') bears bluish purple flowers and is protectively tucked in among felty gray lamb's ears in another of my borders. This easy-care, reliable hybrid is a late bloomer, generally opening its flowers in mid-September and continuing to do so for a month.

Though growing wild throughout much of the eastern and midwestern United States, towering New England aster has problems in mid-Atlantic gardens. Shooting up to 6 feet tall, the leaves on the bottom stems often shrivel, giving the plants a leggy, shabby appearance (noted plantsperson Stephanie Cohen so aptly describes it as a "bare-bottom look"). And, if that's not bad enough, unstaked plants flop when in flower. I have tried and discarded the purplish-blue species plant and the lusciously colored cultivars 'Harrington's Pink' and 'Honeysong Pink'.

In 1989, however, I read about 'Alma Potschke' (officially named 'Andenken an Alma Potschke') and have treasured it in

photos this page by Patricia A. Taylor





Above: 'Alice Haslam'

Right: 'Alice Haslam' (full view).



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Clockwise from top:

'Professor Anton Kippenberg' (Rob Cardillo)

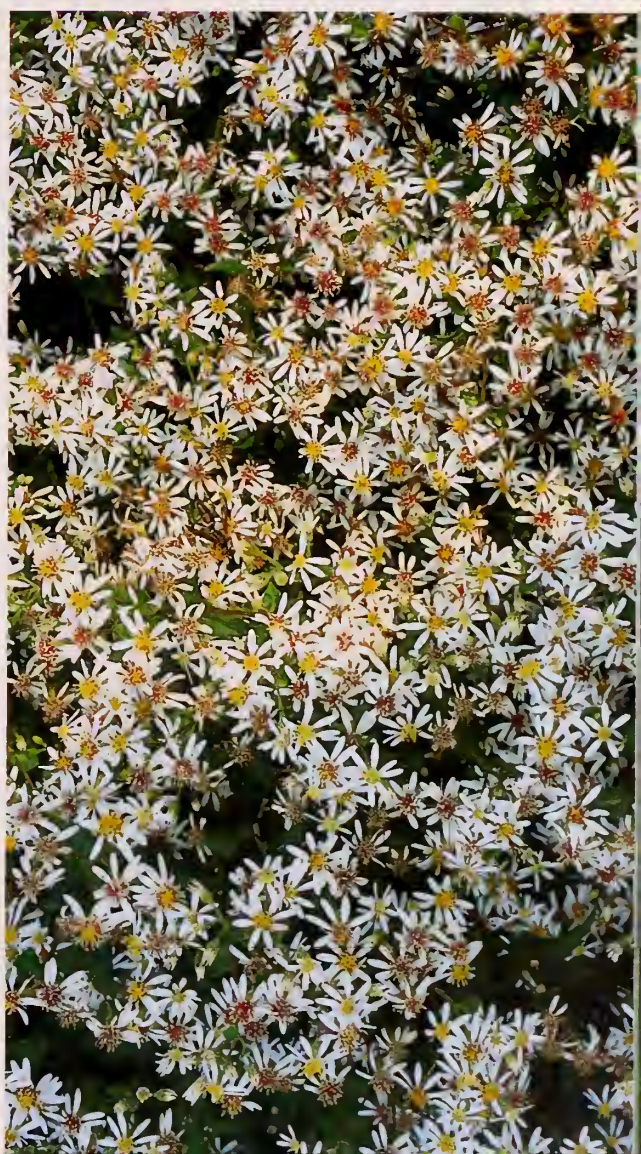
Whitewood aster (Pete Prown)

'Bluebird' (Rob Cardillo)

A. umbellatus (Patricia A. Taylor)







my gardens ever since (pictured on pg. 27). The introduction of this German-bred New England aster, in 1969, represented a breakthrough in both its compact stature and flower color. Topping out at 4 feet, it gets no taller than 3 feet in my garden because I cut it back to about 12 inches in late June. The flowers are an exquisite cerise-pink and are a great complement to white boltonias (*B. asteroides*) and deep blue salvias (*S. azurea*). Depending on the year's growing conditions, 'Alma Potschke' blooms for three to four weeks, starting in early to mid-September.

And then there is 'Purple Dome'. This dwarf New England aster—only 18 to 24 inches tall—was spotted growing in a Pennsylvania roadside ditch. Dr. Richard Lighty, former director of the Mt. Cuba Center, introduced it in 1990 and it has been winning rave reviews ever since. It forms a mound of dark green leaves that are covered with violet-blue flowers in early fall. I look forward to decorating my borders with it in October.


Anne S. Cunningham

'Purple Dome'

The next aster on my list is the woefully neglected *A. umbellatus.* Though Gertrude Jekyll championed it in her designs, it somehow never caught the public's fancy.

It caught mine, however, in 1991 and I have been charmed with it ever since. Its foliage remains disease-free and I have yet to see any signs of insect nibbling. Starting in early to mid-August, this aster blooms its heart out for eight weeks or more. The masses of small, creamy white flowers attract bees and butterflies.

Left on its own, *A. umbellatus* can soar up to 8 feet. I let it do so amidst the equally tall, maroon purple giant ironweed (*Vernonia altissima*) and the two form a wonderful privacy screen and a great colorful end to the garden year. In an island garden, however, I cut back this aster to about 10 inches in late June. This encourages profuse branching and limits the plant's height to about 3 feet. The result: a sturdy hedge that flowers for weeks on end in late summer. Both borders are located in my fenced back yard, which is probably a good thing, as I have read that deer do like *A. umbellatus.* The rabbits that wiggle through do not nibble on it.

Smooth aster (*A. laevis*) is becoming *au courant* in gardening circles and much of this is due to the keen eye of Dr. Lighty. He spotted a particularly lovely, floriferous specimen of this aster and introduced it as the 'Blue Bird' cultivar. I've had the species plant since 1995 and have enjoyed its three weeks of bloom starting in mid-September each year.

This aster has lance-shaped basal foliage that has distinct blue tones in the spring garden. It grows 3 to 4 feet tall and, when in flower, is covered with light, violet blue blossoms with golden yellow centers, creating a light, airy presence in the late-season garden. I pair my smooth aster with 'Ruby Wine' monarda (*Monarda didyma*) and the royal blue flowers of *Scutellaria incana.* Perhaps because of this close association with two pungent members of the mint family, deer and rabbits leave my smooth aster alone.

It is a pleasure to recommend the white wood aster (*A. divaricatus*). Unlike all the sun lovers above, this is a shade plant. Its early leaves are grayish hued and backed with dark purple tones. Often in the wild and sometimes in the garden as well, the stems and stalks remain a dark purple throughout the growing season. Growing 1 to 2 feet tall, it bears white flowers with rosy disks throughout September and generally into the first week of October. White wood aster is such a common sight in woods throughout the east that many take it for granted. It really is a wonderful addition to shaded fall gardens, which are usually bare of any color.

William Cullina, the New England Wild Flower Society's nursery manager and propagator, cautions that this aster spreads aggressively, but it has not done so in my gardens. Six years ago, I placed it in a dark nook under a 'Forest Pansy' redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), and in that time it has only formed a small patch.

Ever mindful of my editor's admonition to keep this article shorter than, say, *War and Peace*, I now end this treatise on asters. Choose any one of them (careful readers will note that I have kept the number to 10), and you will be rewarded with a burst of refreshing, easy-care color at a time of year when gardens and plants are shutting down. Enjoy!

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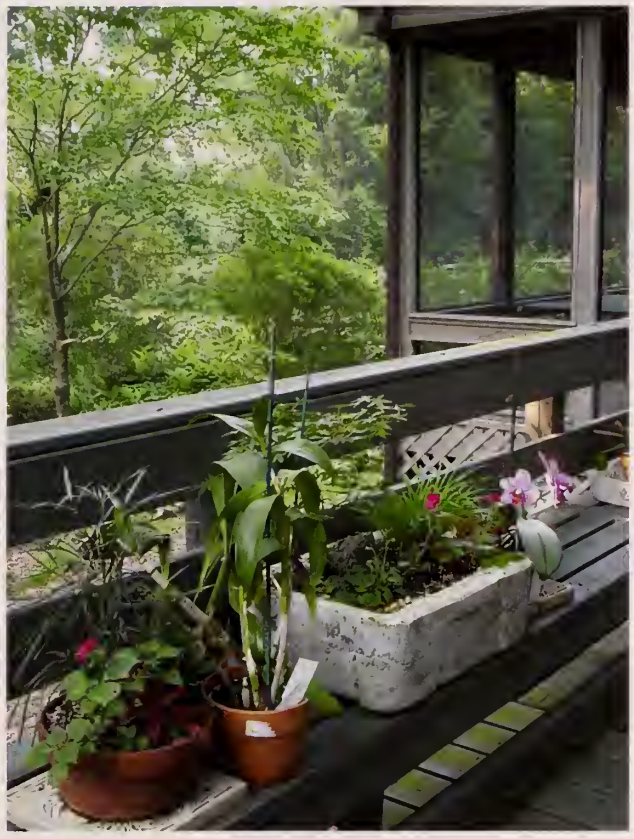
GARDENING INDOORS

by Ilene Sternberg

Most indoor plants are simply émigrés from warmer climes. When the weather gets close to conditions similar to their native habitats, they can benefit from summering outdoors while significantly enhancing your garden display.

But you can't simply haul them out and shock their little petioles by moving them from their customary accommodations to the chilly, windy, sunny vicissitudes of outdoor living. Just as you have to "harden off" annuals, or, for that matter, any plants moved from a greenhouse, you should move your houseplants to colder temperatures gradually—a week on an unheated porch would be fine.

As sensitive as they are to temperature changes, houseplants are equally stunned if moved into full sun too quickly. Without sunblock cream, they're vulnerable to leaf scorch. (Shade-lovers, of course, should spend the entire summer waving their leafy fingers to us from under a tree or canopy of some sort.)



Pete Prown

Try putting them in a wheelbarrow at first so they can be gradually moved to sunnier garden locations. A baby carriage is good, too, since it has that nice hood to protect your more infantile plants. If you go the carriage route, occasionally stick your head inside the pram, and coo—or, better still, sing a lullaby—while you're wheeling them around. (This has absolutely no effect on the plants, but will really freak out your neighbors.)

Once the plants are acclimated, decide where they'll fit best in your garden scheme. You can un-pot them and plunk them into your borders, or sink them, pot and all, into the ground. Or, incorporate them into your container gardens and planters, grouping them with annuals on your terrace or deck. Stage them at varying heights, using pedestals, inverted flowerpots, tables, benches, shelving, tree stumps, etc. to get the desired effect, being mindful of color, shape, texture, and other aesthetics in your arrangement. It's best to keep those with similar cultural requirements together.

Be creative with containers, too: hollowed-out tree stumps; drainage tiles; kitchenware; buckets; magazine racks; seats of old chairs; wood crates; old shoes and boots; candle holders; baskets; teacups; bowls of all kinds; colanders; carts; wheelbarrows and baby carriages; children's toys; tin cans—with or without labels; sinks; old cabinets with drawers; hats; helmets; an old charcoal grill; a grand piano. Well, you get the picture—almost anything that might hold plants.

After summer winds down, and before temperatures fall below 50°F, prepare your plants ready to move back indoors. If you wait 'til temperatures get too low, expect lots of leaf drop when pots come home to roost. Repot plants, if necessary, checking roots for worms and other hangers-on. Foliage should be washed and inspected carefully for any hitchhiking pests. (Nothing's worse than finding an uninvited deer or something clinging to the underside of a leaf when you've brought the plant inside.) If necessary, or just as a precaution, spray with Safer soap, or a neem oil- or canola oil-based product to combat insects. (Fuzzy-leafed plants, however, do not appreciate oil sprays.) And do listen attentively if your invigorated charges begin to regale you with stories about their summer escapades.



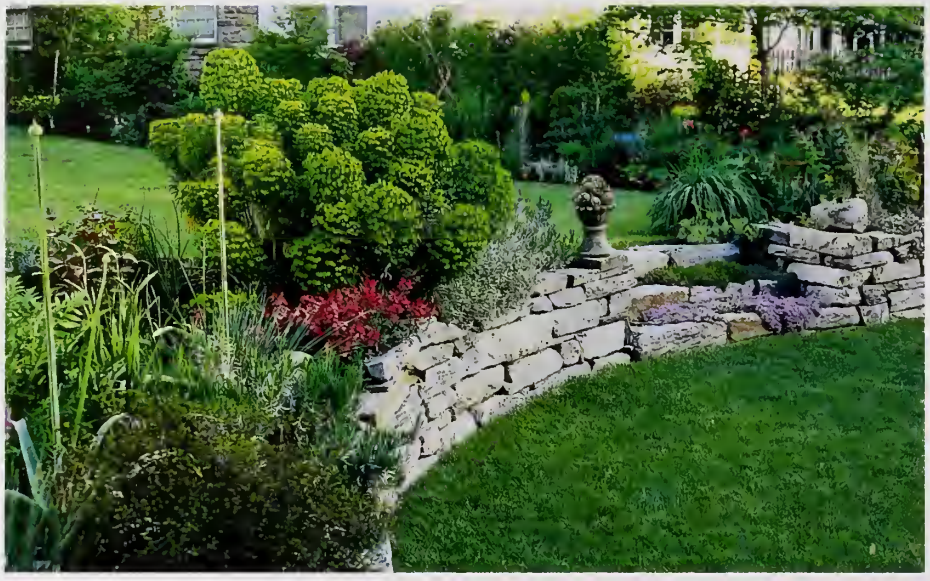
Ilene Sternberg is an award-winning freelance writer who pens a gardening column for *The News Journal* in Wilmington, Delaware.

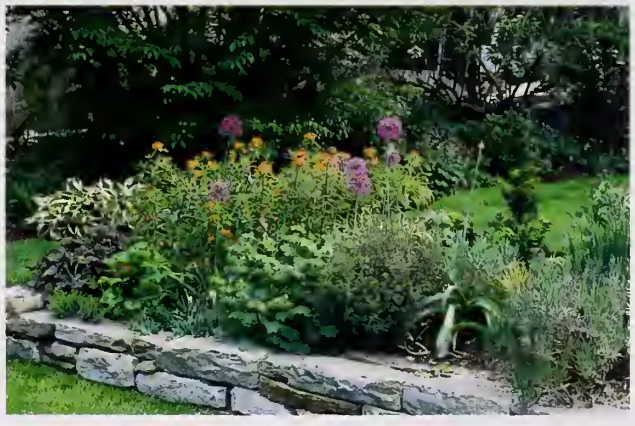
DESIGNING FOR SMALL SPACES

Critiquing Our Own Gardens

by Jeff Jabco

photos by Jeff Jabco





"It is easy to criticize other's work, but much more difficult to see the faults in our own," notes one popular adage. This is definitely true in designing my own garden. After living with a garden for a long time, it becomes too easy to overlook ways that it might be changed or improved. The best way for me to improve our home garden is to step back and really analyze it—with all its faults. I do this by studying other gardens, where I frequently see something that gives me an idea of how to improve our own. Also, I critique our garden at its weakest time—January and August. If a garden looks put together in these cruel months, it has a strong structure that can only be enhanced during the other, more "garden-friendly" months.

In the rear of the 1950s Cape Cod home in Swarthmore, PA, which I share with plantsman Joe Henderson, there was a very gradual slope to a fence row at the back property line. Open lawn extended to this fencerow and to neighbors' lawns on both sides. We decided to separate our property from the neighbors' with mixed borders, and we divided the rear property roughly in half by adding a bisecting wall running from side to side. The wall is an exaggerated "S" curve of dry-laid Wissahickon schist, which matches the house's exterior walls (top photo).

In the center of the back garden, the wall is three feet high and tapers to ground level at both ends, where it is anchored and disappears into the mixed borders. We leveled out the slope in the lower back area and added soil to raise the height of the space closer to the house. The upper level is connected to the lower level by two sets of stone steps, one of which is in full sun and is accented with varieties of thyme.

Although this entire back garden is not large (80 by 90 feet), it seems bigger and was made more interesting by dividing it into two and concentrating on **enclosure** of the space with **curved lines** that define its boundaries. The upper area is closer to the house, and we often use it as spillover when entertaining in nice weather. The border above the wall (bottom photo) is filled with lavender, euphorbias, geraniums, crocosmia, daphnes, dwarf conifers and tulips in the spring, and red and orange dahlias in the summer and autumn. This exuberant border partially conceals the lower, more restrained space.

The lower garden has a strong curved line where a large oval of turf directly meets the vertical of the wall. Mixed borders enclose the other three sides of this space—the yellow border, the sunny border and the shade border, which sits under a mature dogwood, viburnum and tulip tree to the south. Water from the roof feeds a pond in one corner. The rear gardens are where we spend most of our time relaxing, entertaining and doing the majority of our gardening.

From our kitchen, dining room and upstairs bedrooms, we enjoy excellent views of the garden spaces we've created. We'll use these vantage points to continue to critique the gardens and dream up new designs as the years go by.

Jeff Jabco is the director of grounds and coordinator of horticulture at the Scott Arboretum of Swarthmore College.



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Classifieds

TAMING THE DOG DAYS OF SUMMER

by Bill Thomas





photos by Bill Thomas



Summer is blazing hot in the Delaware Valley, a time of the three 'H's: hazy, hot, and humid. But it is also the time of the other three 'H's: *Hibiscus*, *Hydrangea*, and *Heptacodium*. These tough, beautiful plants come on strong just as you are fantasizing about the shores of Maine.

Hibiscus syriacus 'Diana'* (bottom photo) draws me from the house on sultry summer evenings to enjoy its radiance in the moonlight. Situated near the front door, it strikes every evening visitor with the glow of its pure white flowers. Closed, finished petals carpet the ground around the plant like white-frosted TastyCakes. The first flowers of the season open just as Japanese beetles emerge. Clusters of mating beetles detract from the display, but by August, the beetles are gone and the blooms are clean and fresh, continuing until hard frost.

At Longwood Gardens, 'Diana' is grouped with *Caryopteris* × *clandonensis* 'Longwood Blue' (top right photo), for a stunning late-summer combination of white and blue. The blue *Aster tartaricus* also combines well with the hibiscus.

When I moved recently, I had to decide which plants to take with me. The new owner of my former home is a fellow gardener, so I didn't want to strip the property of plants. I chose only plants that were very special aesthetically or sentimentally and were small enough to easily move. *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Blue Billows'* (also known as *Hydrangea serrata* 'Blue Billow') made the cut. Even though this species and its close relative, *Hydrangea macrophylla*, are often the first to wilt in drought, this cultivar is special enough to keep. Its lace cap, clear blue flowers are light in texture and the color radiates on warm afternoons.

My plant was a gift from the great Winterthur plantsman Hal Bruce. His close friend, horticulturist Dr. Richard Lighty, collected it in Korea. In my old garden, I juxtaposed the hydrangea with *Acanthus* and *Hosta sieboldii*, near a yellow-edged *Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Nana Lutea'. In my new garden, 'Blue Billows' will be one of the special plants on my north-facing patio. Planting it in shade will reduce its need for extra water.

*Heptacodium miconioides** (top left), the seven-son flower, has only been around for a couple of decades, meaning old plants are few and very special. Its white flowers open in September, covering the plant in bloom (and this large shrub reaches 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide, so that means a lot of flowers). After several weeks of show, the petals drop off, leaving rosy red calyces behind. The calyces put on a strong performance until hard frost (usually 4 to 6 weeks). *Heptacodium* makes a significant specimen plant, trained to just a couple of stems to highlight the bark, which is especially attractive in winter. A groundcover of liriope (either the straight species with blue flowers or a white-blooming cultivar) sets off the shrub with dark green foliage and late season flowers.

For those of us who don't run off to the mountains or the coast during the summer, late-blooming shrubs are a godsend. Use these three H's to help you fend off the hazy, hot, and humid blues.

*PHS Gold Medal Plant

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Bill Thomas is the executive director of Chanticleer in Wayne, PA.



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Classifieds

Heart of the Community

A Visit to Philadelphia's Norris Square Neighborhood


Ira Beckoff

The Norris Square neighborhood in lower North Philadelphia is alive with vibrant gardens and green spaces that reflect the area's largely Latino population. For example, at *Las Parcelas* community garden—which is filled with thriving vegetable plots and flowerbeds, as well as an outdoor kitchen—neighbors built the colorful *Casita* ("little house") to represent life in Puerto Rico in the early 20th century. The neighborhood's residents also celebrate their heritage through colorful murals and art objects in the gardens that depict Puerto Rican life and culture, such as the indigenous Taino Indians and island folklore.

But Norris Square wasn't always this way. Today's lively gardens are a far cry from a time when the community seemed to hit bottom. It began to decline a few decades ago, when factory closings deprived it of jobs and thousands of homeowners relocated, leaving behind an area scarred by vacant buildings and blight.

Beginning in the late 1980s, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Philadelphia Green program forged a fruitful collaboration with the Norris Square Neighborhood Project, a nonprofit organization that focuses on environmental education for children. Philadelphia Green worked with the Neighborhood Project and local residents to create gardens, small sitting parks, street-tree plantings, and blocks lined with colorful windowboxes and containers. Together, they have completed more than 70 projects in the neighborhood.

"We used neighborhood greening as a way to build people's confidence and increase community cohesion," says Philadelphia Green's Eileen Gallagher. By getting involved in the gardens, Norris Square residents eagerly began to take back their community—physically, socially, and spiritually.

The Norris Square Neighborhood Project also uses the gardens for education, teaching children about their *raices*, or roots, and about the importance of serving the community.

Notes Iris Brown, a community leader recently appointed chair of the Philadelphia Green Advisory Board, "We want our youth to be proud of who they are and where they come from."



The "heart of the community," Norris Square Park, has undergone a complete transformation. Dead and dying trees were removed and replaced, a new pergola area serves the nearby senior citizens center, and there is a new playground and new entryways that feature the mosaic tile work of local children.

"People now want to live around the park," says Sister Carol Keck of the Norris Square Neighborhood Project. "And those already living in the community have invested in improving their homes—another sign of the neighborhood's encouraging developments."

The neighborhood got a chance to really shine this year, when Iris Brown served as a consultant for the 2003 Philadelphia Flower Show, "Festival de las Flores." For her, helping to plan the Show's Central Feature was "a dream come true." "Every minute of every day, we celebrate our culture in our own community," she says, "and through the Flower Show, we were able to share that culture."

—John Gannon and Jane Carroll



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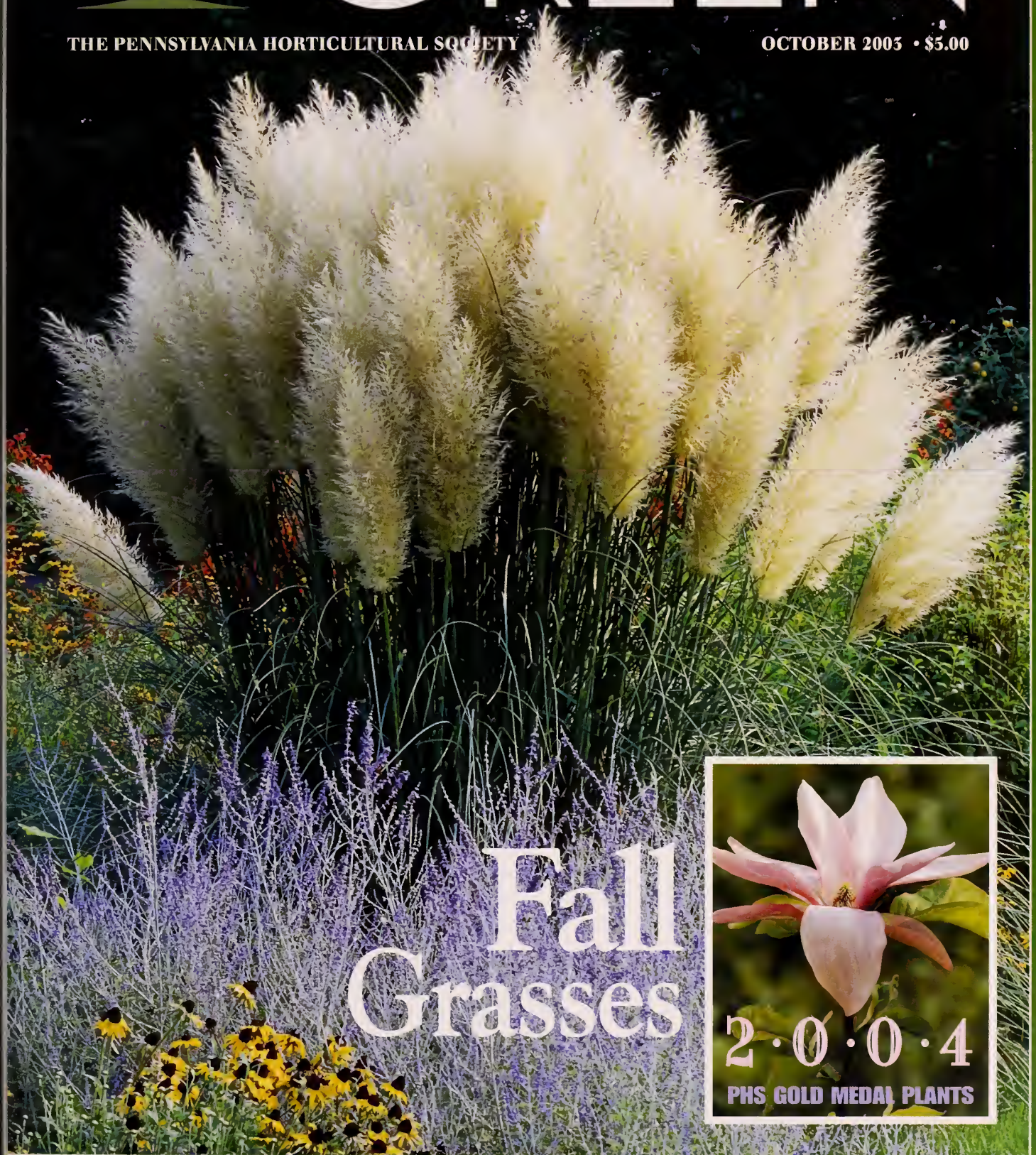
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The Art Studio will be completed in late fall as well and members of the newly formed Art Studio Committee have had valuable input into the design features. The area currently used by our resident artists will be converted to a Sculpting Studio.

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Ornamental grasses can help to accent perennial borders or even create entire landscapes, but in the chilly air of October, many of these grasses mature into a symphony of color, texture, and movement. Join writer and photographer Rob Cardillo as he talks with several enthusiasts of these autumnal showstoppers.

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PHS's Gold Medal Plants include outstanding trees, shrubs and woody vines that require little care, are gamely resistant to pests and disease, and hold interest throughout the seasons. The winning class of 2004 boasts a particular aromatic quality, so let's let our own Joe Ziccardi introduce three winners that cannot help but inspire olfaction.



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Though you can find them everywhere throughout southeastern Pennsylvania's woodlands and meadows, wildflowers—with their often-diminutive blooms—can seem practically invisible to the untrained eye. But through the words and images of photographer Stanley J. Miller, Jr., these overlooked flowers are revealed in startling detail.

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo of grasses by Rob Cardillo

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Bidding for Begonias

Like lots of folks, I enjoy taking part in Internet auctions, such as those offered by the popular site, *eBay.com*. They're fun, anonymous and, usually, you can find a bargain buy or two. After four years of buying and selling, I never cease to be amazed at what you can buy at an auction—cars, houses, vacations, diamonds, and so on. A neighbor of mine even auctioned off a 1974 BMW sedan...piece by piece. Yes, there are people out there actually *looking* for '74 BMW bumpers.

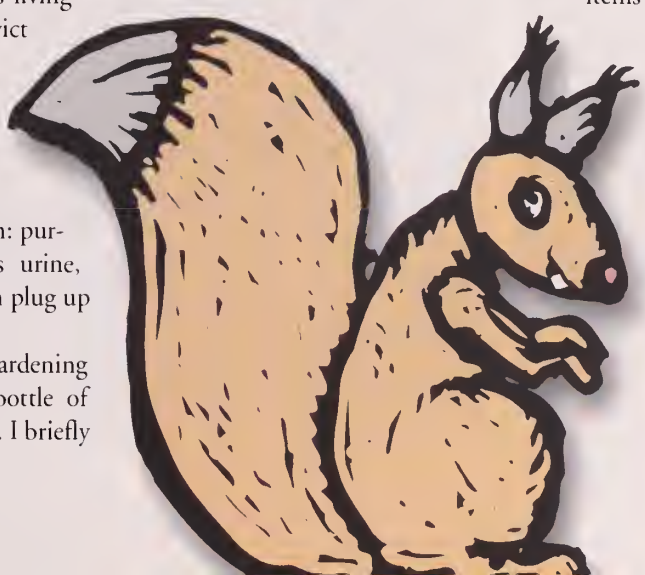
What does that have to do with us gardeners? Well, you might be surprised at what kind of garden-related auctions exist online. For example, a quick eBay search on "garden hose" yielded 157 active auctions, while "bonsai pot" brought up 179 auctions. And let's not forget plants—in my searches, I've probably found *tens* of thousands of plants available to bid on.



Throwing caution to the wind, I bought a few trees and plants on eBay this past spring. In one auction, I landed five weeping cherries for $15 and in another, a trio of crape myrtles for $9.99. And my *coup de grace:* five 'Knock Out' roses for a mere $3.95 apiece. "*Great gladioli!*," you exalt, giddily, "There must be a gardener's gold mine online!"

Well, there are a few caveats to the Internet's auction mania. The living plants you can buy, for example, are often tiny. I mean, *really* tiny. I bought a "Beautiful Redbud Tree" at one auction, picturing a 4-foot tree in a sturdy plastic pot showing up on my doorstep. Instead, it came bare root in a small tube and was all of 6 inches long. I am anticipating its first flush of bloom sometime in the spring of 2013. Same for my weeping cherries—*I* actually wept when I saw how small they were. As the saying goes, "You get what you pay for."

My most absurd garden-auction conquest occurred a few weeks ago. I have a family of squirrels living in my roof and wanted to evict them for defaulting on the rent, as well as for making scuffling noises at all times of the day and night—must be all those electrical wires they're chewing on. So I came up with a plan: purchase some predatory animal's urine, dose the squirrel's nest, and then plug up their entrance after they leave.



I visited eBay and, in the gardening accessories category, found a bottle of "100% Fox Urine" for six bucks. I briefly wondered how they got the urine from a fox, but then decided I didn't really want to know. I bought it anyway and had it shipped to me within a few days. Once applied, the stuff works instantly—it has such a horrible, pungent aroma that it caused the squirrels to bolt from their rooftop condominium, chattering angrily at each other. (I think the rough translation was something like, "How did that fox urine get into the roof? I didn't know foxes could climb ladders. Let's get out of here!")

Being a seller as well as a buyer, I figured that since the squirrels had vamoosed and I had only used an ounce of liquid, I would put it back up for sale at a lesser amount. Sure, enough, I posted the auction and sold it for $5 within a few days. Once paid, I packaged the offending substance very carefully and shipped it off. The lady at the post office did ask me if the package contained any hazardous materials, to which I replied, "*Ummm...errrr...*no." Unless, I reasoned to myself, you're a squirrel. And off it went.

I wish there was an uplifting moral to this tale of using online auctions to cure your home and garden woes, but alas, there isn't one. I shipped the fox box off on a Monday and, by Tuesday, the squirrels realized the unpleasant fragrance had dissipated and borrowed their way back into their hole. So a month after my campaign, I'm back to square one, having lost $1 between the purchase and selling price, and am still dealing with the noisy squirrels in the roof.

What have I learned from the experience? First off, I've learned that squirrels are smarter than they look and, in kind, I am not. Secondly, I've learned that there is a world of weird, wacky garden items to choose from online—hardly enough to replace your beloved local nursery, but certainly something to catch your attention. Even as we speak, there are 36 active auctions for succulent *Pachypodiums* plants from Africa and Madagascar on eBay. Do I hear a bid of two dollars?

Pete Brown

email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*

Simplicity in the Jungle

"It's a jungle around here," says Nicki Neff of her sloping hillside property in Philadelphia's thickly wooded suburbs. Her contemporary house hangs off a steep slope, sitting perhaps 15-feet lower than the nearby road. Behind the residence, there's an even greater drop to a creek basin full of sunlight-blocking ash, tulip poplar and locust trees. No doubt, this is gardening in the suburban jungle.

Jungle or not, Nikki, a scientist at Merck, and her husband Richard Schultz, a U. Penn biology professor, have carved out an intimate garden in the front of the house, using simple Asian influences and a creative use of space. "I'm drawn to smaller, simpler gardens," she notes. "I grew up in Oregon in a



Richard Schultz and Nikki Neff



A relaxing patio surrounded by pines and other texture plantings.



"It's not strictly Asian—I like mixing plants and ideas, so I'll put in perennials and containers, too."



Garden photos by Pete Prown

Above: The fusion look—a Japanese-style fence surrounded by big-leafed tropicals.

Above right: A view "down" the driveway to Nikki and Richard's garden.

gardening family, so I probably picked up the Japanese motifs there. But it's not strictly Asian—I like mixing plants and ideas, so I'll put in perennials and containers, too."

When they moved in 13 years ago, the front was just a long driveway area with a small strip of grass alongside the house. Eventually, they worked with Philadelphia landscape architect Susan Mattison to develop a new plan, which tamed the almost-vertical slope between the road and the garden area with existing ivy and new wooden ties. On the ground, there's a flat area of slate pavers with beds of flowers, lawn, small trees, and containers tucked in here and there. Overhead, gnarled branches of black and white pines, dogwood, and cherry trees punctuate the naturalistic environment.

"I stopped using chemicals anywhere on the property about nine years ago," Nikki recalls, "Since then, we get lots more birds, toads, and praying mantises. It's made a real difference."

Of special interest are the plantings along the roadside, high above the garden. There, Nikki planted graceful ornamental grasses (such as *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'), a variety of evergreen and berried shrubs with winter interest, and a few specimen conifers (black pine, false cypress, cedar and *Cryptomeria japonica*).

Although the rest of her neighborhood is somewhat conservative in terms of landscaping, the dramatic textured border is a real draw. "The neighbors like our 'not-too-manicured' look, and they stop and talk to us about *this* plant or *that* tree. It's been nice to meet them through our gardening," she reflects. "A lot of work is required to maintain this garden, and we may get some basic landscaping help in the future to keep the jungle under control. But I still get to do plenty of deadheading and pruning. Aside from relaxing and entertaining, those are my favorite jobs in the garden."

—Pete Prown



Ilene Sternberg

Pretty in Pink

"There are still many to whom the thought of a 'pink' daffodil is preposterous," the late Grant Mitsch, icon among American narcissus hybridizers, remarked in 1966. Nevertheless, there are now over 2,000 pink-cupped cultivars in all 13 daffodil categories, introducing a lovely soft contrast to the brilliant primary colors of most spring displays.

Of course, one man's pink is another man's salmon. Though some daffodils now have blush tones in their petals (perianths), "pink daffodil" usually refers to those whose trumpets (coronas, crowns, or cups) range from palest peach to rosiest red. Some are vivid coral, a few border on lavender, others combine apricot cups with yellow perianths. Color intensity can be influenced by soil and climatic conditions.

Pinks were first registered in 1898, but 'Mrs. R.O. Backhouse' was the first to gain acclaim in 1923, remaining popular today. Hybridizers cross-pollinated pinks, aiming for a truer red. It takes about 20 years to develop and market each new cultivar. Mitsch produced many, including the award-winning 'Accent', still one of the prettiest, strongest growers available.

I've grown pink-cups for 19 years. Prize-winning 'Salomé', graceful, with yellow-apricot cups gradually turning peach; stands of 'Foundling', pale frilly-rimmed short-cups framed by swept-back petals; and 'Delnashaugh', a double with a jumble of peach and white at the heart, are venerable favorites. Long-blooming 'Kaydee', whose splendid rosy cup turns brighter daily; and 'Supreme Empire', with its astonishing broad, salmon-red corona, are my latest pets.

Plant pink daffodils in well-drained soil with at least a half-day of sun. Many start yellow, then turn rosy, and develop and retain the best color if given late afternoon shade. Flowers last longer with some wind protection. If your clumps produce fewer flowers, dig and move them while foliage is visible and you still can find them. Leave the leaves, however floppy and pitiful, so bulbs can power up for the following year. Don't braid, tie, bend, fold, spindle, or mutilate them, as this inhibits the bulbs' ability to photosynthesize.

Pinks go well with blue pansies, white sweet alyssum, grape hyacinth, starflower (*Ipheion uniflorum*), flowering almond, any burgundy or gray-leaved plants, and, certainly, green. Best of all, pink daffs bloom around Easter and Passover, supplying perfect gift bouquets and table decorations for holiday dinners. Finally! A chance to impress the relatives.

—Ilene Sternberg

SOURCES

- **John Scheepers, Inc.**
 johnscheepers.com
 860-567-0838
- **Brent and Becky's Bulbs**
 brentandbeckysbulbs.com
 804-693-3966
- **Mitsch Novelty Daffodils**
 Hubbard, OR
 503-651-2742
- **Oakwood Daffodils**
 Niles, MS
 616-684-3327
- **Oregon Trail Daffodils**
 Corbett, OR
 503-695-5513

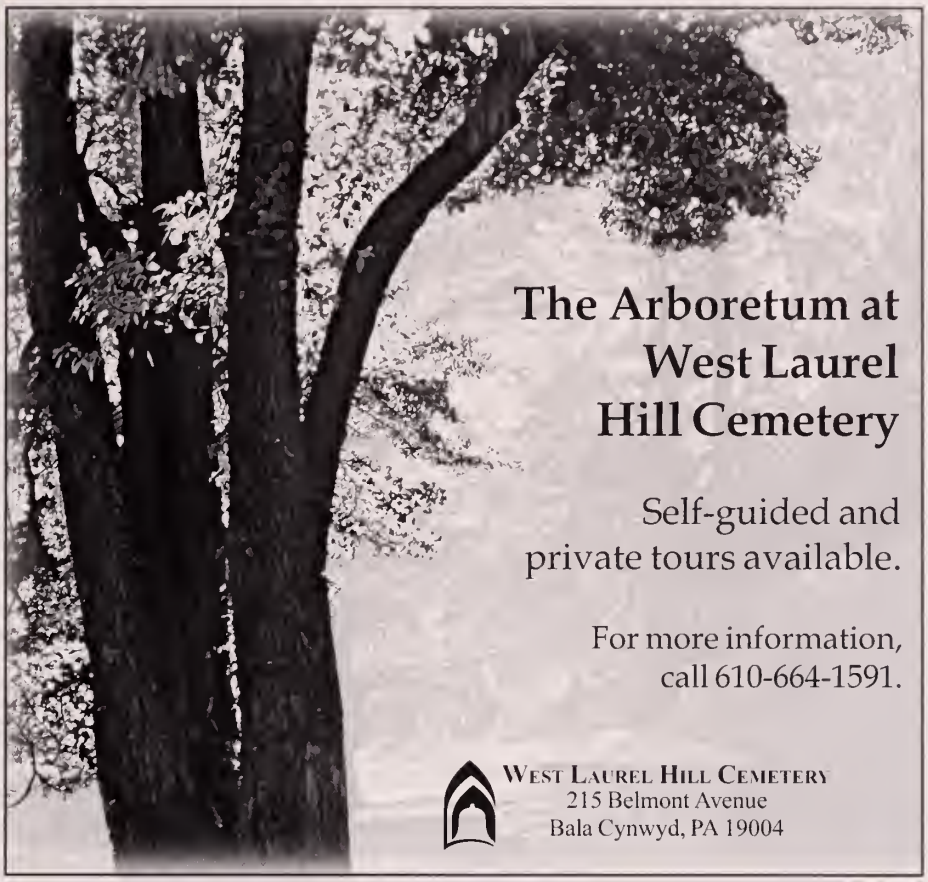


Coming Soon . . . The Flower Show Book!

This November 1st, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society proudly presents **The Philadelphia Flower Show, Celebrating 175 Years** (published by HarperCollins). Released in time for the Show's anniversary in 2004, this magnificent hardcover book features 282 pages and hundreds of gorgeous photographs. It is the first-ever volume to capture the majesty and spectacular color of this event.

The book was written by award-winning garden writer Adam Levine (*Garden Design, This Old House, Green Scene*) and long-time Flower Show exhibitor Ray Rogers. Also featured are the vivid photographs of Adam Laipson and an introduction by noted garden-guru, Ken Druse.

Along with wonderful images of the Flower Show past and present, there are warm anecdotes from long-time exhibitors and colorful stories about the Show's history. Surely, this is a must-have book for any faithful visitor to the Philadelphia Flower Show, as well as those who admire it from afar. It will be available at Borders and other fine bookstores. The book will also be available online through the Show's website, *www.theflowershow.com.*





Fall for Grasses

Enjoying the Autumnal Pleasures of this Garden Sophisticate

Story and photos by Rob Cardillo

What's not to love about ornamental grasses? With their strong symmetrical shapes, extensive range of textures and colors, and legendary adaptability to most sites and soils, they've endeared themselves to gardeners all over the country. They can punctuate perennial borders when used individually or dominate entire landscapes when planted in masses. They're versatile, elegant and hardworking plants at any time of the year, but fall is the season when most grasses really begin to strut their stuff.



Above: Ornamental grasses at Frelinghuysen Arboretum in Morristown, N.J.

Right: 1. Sorghum

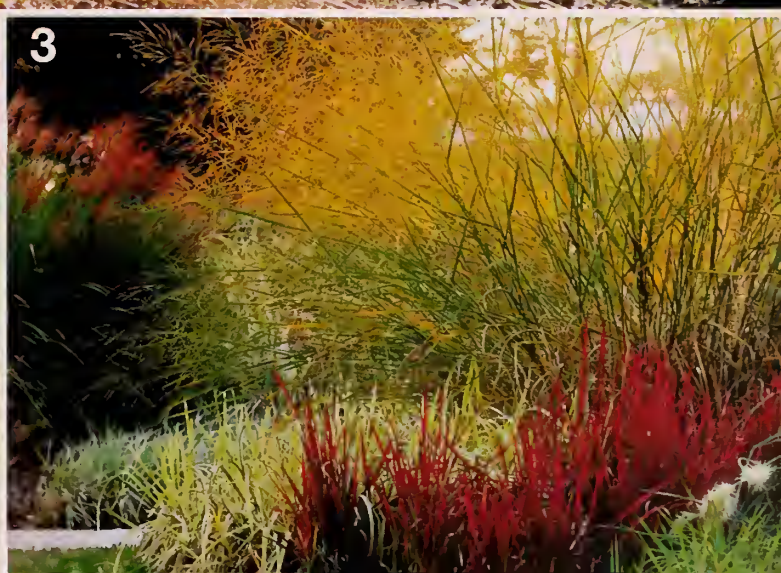
2. *Hakonechola macra* 'Aureola', fall color

3. *Imperata* 'Rubra', *Pennisetum, Glyceria.*



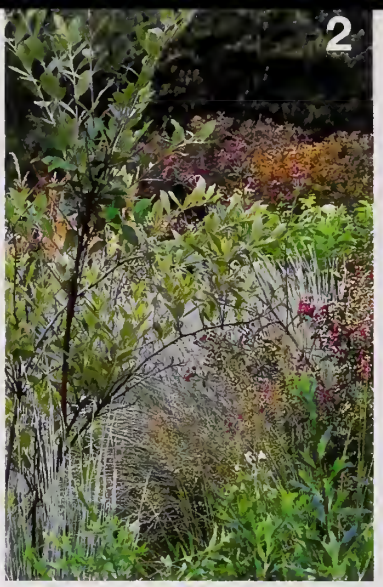


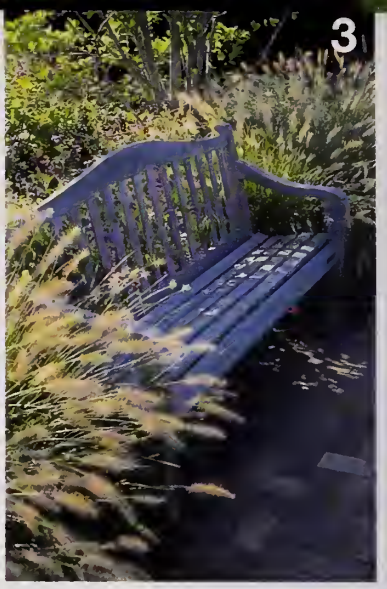

2


3

1. *Calamagrostris acutifolia* 'Overdam'
2. *Schizachyrium scoparium* 'The Blues'
3. *Pennisetum alopecuroides*
4. *Chasmanthium latifolium* 'Wild Oats'











Panicum virgatum 'Panic Grass'

As the days shorten and nights become cooler, many grasses mature into luminous fountains with towering spikes and feathery plumes that appear ablaze when back-lit by the low autumn sun. Some exchange their summery green for metallic tones of rust, bronze, gold, or silver, while others slip into shades of scarlet, pink, orange or purple. And as their stalks dry and stiffen, they pleasantly rustle and sigh in the breeze, adding another layer to the seasonal soundtrack of chirping crickets and gathering geese.

SO MANY GRASSES

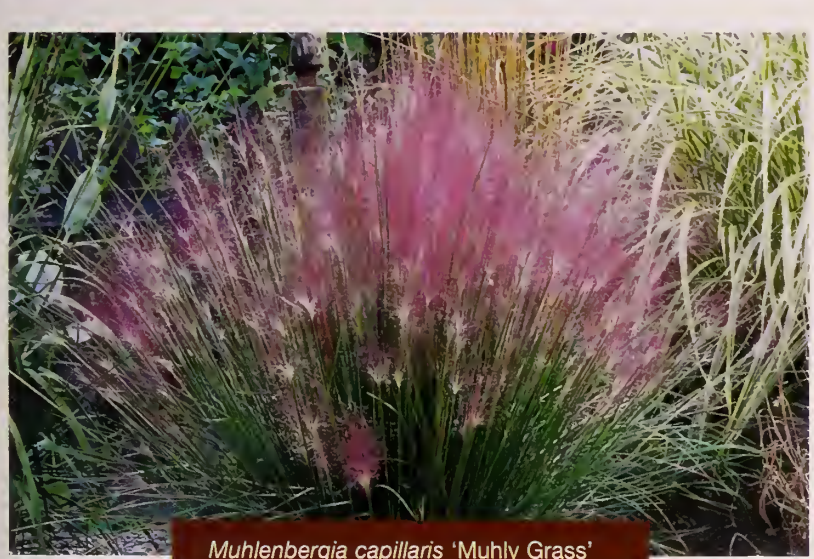
Once considered novelties, thousands of grasses are now available including many with exceptional fall interest. *Green Scene* columnist Nancy Ondra, author of *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Storey Books 2002), has a fondness for little bluestem 'The Blues' (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), a medium-sized selection of a native grass. "I love the way the pink-blue foliage turns coppery in the fall and how beautiful this grass looks when planted in masses," she says. She's also been eyeing other bluestem cultivars just now becoming available, such as 'Prairie Embers', which features astounding reddish-purple autumn foliage that glows like stained glass when lit from behind.

Nancy also recommends the dense and mounding prairie

dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*), with its cilantro-scented fall flowers. "The finely textured leaves turn a rich bronze and hold up well throughout the entire winter," she notes. And feather reed grass (*Calamagrostis* × *acutiflora*) makes her list too, especially the carefree cultivars 'Karl Foerster' and 'Overdam', with their buff-toned feathery plumes. "I used to think they were boring as single plants but they're absolutely fabulous when planted in groups, and you really can't use them badly," says Nancy.

Landscape consultant, writer and photographer Rick Darke, author of *The Color Encyclopedia of Ornamental Grasses* (Timber Press 1999), also offers a few top fall performers to consider, including switch grass (*Panicum virgatum*). "The cultivar 'Dallas Blues' is a big, robust grass with huge flower plumes that turn from blue to mauve to a very showy purple-red in the fall," he reports of this tough, drought-tolerant and long-lived native plant. He's also fond of the tall, airy plumes and amber-gold autumn foliage of 'Cloud Nine' and suggests using it and other grasses in large sweeps or as privacy screens.

Rick also appreciates the clump-forming wild oats (*Chasmanthium latiflolium*), a Pennsylvania native of woodland streams. "The dangling oat-like clusters are especially beautiful when dusted by an early snow," he says. And although it readily self-sows in his garden, he simply scratches out the unwanted seedlings every spring. Muhly grass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*) is another fall winner for Rick, with its bright pink flowers that appear cloud-like above the plant.



Muhlenbergia capillaris 'Muhly Grass'



MISUNDERSTOOD MISCANTHUS: CHOOSE CAREFULLY

You may have heard that the very popular Japanese silver grass (*Miscanthus*) has joined the list of potentially invasive plants for our area, but there's more to the story. Dale Hendricks, co-owner of Northcreek Nurseries, a wholesale grower of mostly native plants in Landenberg, PA, chose to stop propagating any miscanthus varieties 10 years ago. "They're undoubtedly beautiful, but some types spread aggressively, especially from here southward," he reports. And although not officially listed as an invasive yet, "they can certainly displace native species in some areas," he adds.

If you do choose to grow miscanthus in your garden, stick with older cultivars that bloom later such as 'Morning Light', 'Gracillimus' or 'Zebrinus', which rarely have enough time in our region to produce mature seed. "But with so many other wonderful grasses available, it's not hard to find an equally stunning substitute," says Dale.

SOURCES FOR ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Gateway Nursery
Hockesin, DE

Linden Hill Gardens
Ottsville, PA

Limerock Ornamental Grasses
Port Matilda, PA



Cortaderia selloana 'Pumilia', *Perovskia* and *rudbeckia*.

ALONE OR IN GROUPS

Grasses can be planted singly as specimens in a mixed border or massed together to create an overall textural background. At their Landenberg home, Rick Darke and his wife Melinda Zoehrer have created a spectacular fall border with some of their favorite grasses popping out of a mid-height groundcover of two native asters, 'October Skies and 'Raydon's Favorite' (*Aster oblongifolius*). "These drought-tolerant asters get completely covered with blue flowers and make an excellent counterpoint to so many fall grasses," Rick tells us. He also adds native shrubs to the mix, including spicebush, sumac and viburnum, to yield a mélange of orange, amber, apricot and burgundy hues.

Landscape architect Pete Moscufo, owner of Piedmont Designs in Kimberton, has installed some outstanding fall borders by pairing dwarf fountain grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) with Sedum 'Autumn Joy', blue star (*Amsonia hubrichtii*), and *Rudbeckia maxima*. "Use grasses in combination with perennials that have attractive fall foliage or seed heads that you intentionally keep in the garden for *their* beauty," he advises. "The burgundies, browns and golds of the turning perennials extend your garden season, and the earthy color scheme is already worked out for you!" For a guaranteed fall winner he suggests using panicum with a combination of *Boltonia*, *Caryopteris*, and his favorite chrysanthemum cultivar, 'Sheffield'. "And don't forget to include some shorter, fall-flowering perennials for the front of the border, like *Aster* 'Purple Dome'," he adds.

For combinations with woody plants, Pete suggests *Rhus aromatica* 'Gro-lo'. "Rhus 'Gro-Lo' is a wonderful, low-growing groundcover sumac that's spectacular with grasses," says Pete. Most gardeners might not know this attractive plant with lobed leaves, but like most sumacs, it tolerates exposed sites and responds well

to aggressive pruning. "The green foliage is handsome through the growing season, and the deep, orange-red fall color is absolutely unparalleled. It's a guaranteed knock-out alongside any ornamental grass!" Pete exclaims.

Garden designer Jerry Fritz, of Linden Hill Gardens in Ottsville, likes to include movement as well as visual beauty in the landscapes he creates. "Ornamental grasses are the best way to achieve motion in the garden," he reports. "Their flowers sway and sparkle with any light breeze, and you can often see the wind move from one side of the garden to the other." He also sites grasses on western edges so that afternoon light passes through and illuminates them. Aside from aesthetics, he also admires their toughness. "We planted 25 different types of grasses in a Princeton garden a few years ago and not one was eaten by deer. Plus, they rarely needed water during the drought and came back afterwards with a vengeance," he says.

CARE, BUT NOT SO MUCH FEEDING

Growing ornamental grasses is a snap. Most want full sun but there are a few that don't mind the shade, like Hakone grass or wild oats. Like most other perennials, potted nursery specimens should be planted in holes dug twice as wide as the pot and then watered regularly for a few weeks until their roots are established. But don't go overboard. Most grasses prefer a lean, dry soil, and too much water and fertilizer can make them floppy and disease-prone. If you're after mass plantings, try to find a source of plugs. These are simply trays of smaller plants that landscapers use to cover large areas.

Maintenance is straightforward. You cut back the dead foliage once a year, but when you do so is entirely up to you. Some grasses look shabby after the summer growing season and should be shorn in the fall, like giant reed grass and Japanese blood grass. But the dried foliage and seed heads on many others are essential elements of the winter landscape and should be left alone. Moreover, leaving the foliage through the cold season prevents possible rots, and birds often seek out the seed heads. In the spring, before the new growth emerges, cut down the dead parts close to the ground with a hand pruner, grass shears or hedge trimmer, depending on the size and thickness of the stems. If the foliage is floppy and hard to get to, bundle the plant around its middle with a bit of twine and you'll have easier access to the bottom. Plus, you'll have the bound stalks all ready to lift and move to the compost pile.

Take a closer look at some fabulous displays of autumn grasses this year with a trip to Chanticleer, Longwood or the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, and don't be surprised if you begin to fall for grasses all over again.

Writer-photographer Rob Cardillo's work has appeared in Organic Gardening, Country Living Gardener, and Garden Design.



SOME GREAT GRASSES FOR FALL FOLIAGE

Andropogon virginicus, broom-sedge
Calamagrosti × *acutiflora*, feather reed grass, especially 'Karl Foerster' and 'Overdam'
Chasmanthium latiflolium, wild oats
Cortaderia, pampas grass
Imperata cylindrica, 'Rubra', Japanese blood grass
Molina caerulea subsp. *arundinacea*, purple moor grass, especially 'Skyracer' (above)
Muhlenbergia capillaris, pink muhly grass
Panicum virgatum, switch grass, especially 'Dallas Blues' and 'Cloud Nine'
Pennisetum sp., fountain grass especially 'Cassian' (below) and 'Rubrum'
Schizachyrium scoparium, little bluestem, especially 'The Blues'
Sporobolus heterolepis, prairie dropseed



The Scent of a Winner

PHS's 2004 Gold Medal Award Winners

Exceptional fragrance is a characteristic shared by the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Gold Medal Plant Award winners in 2004. This year's three winners produce very fragrant flowers that are sure to grab your attention. A Magnolia called 'Daybreak', with its large showy flowers, vies for the spotlight. But the other two winners, both evergreen shrubs, Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Goshiki' and Sarcococca hookeriana var. humilis, produce inconspicuous but very aromatic blooms themselves and are not going to hide in the shadows.





Courtesy of Monrovia Nurseries

Magnolia 'Daybreak'

by Joe Ziccardi, PHS Gold Medal Plant coordinator

***Magnolia* 'Daybreak'** is an outstanding addition to the Gold Medal *Magnolia* collection. Hybridized by the late Dr. August E. Kehr, 'Daybreak' is a cross between *Magnolia* × *brooklynensis* 'Woodsman' and *Magnolia* 'Tina Durio'. The medium-green foliage is clean and attractive. It blooms in May, long after any chance of frost damage, with unsurpassed fragrance. The large deep pink flowers open to 9 to 10 inches in diameter. The upright growth habit and medium size of 'Daybreak' make it an excellent choice as a specimen tree. Planted alone in the front yard or as a focal point in your private garden, this *Magnolia* will enhance any design. Dr. Kehr noted it is also pollution tolerant, possibly making it a good choice for urban situations.

The Gold Medal Plant Award's *Magnolia* collection also includes *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Bracken's Brown Beauty', *Magnolia grandiflora* 'Edith Bogue', *Magnolia* 'Elizabeth', *Magnolia* 'Galaxy', and *Magnolia stellata* 'Centennial'. You can peruse this cavalcade of magnificent magnolias on our website, *www.goldmedalplants.com*

SIZE: 25'H x 15'W.
HARDINESS: Zone 5 to 8.
LIGHT: Full sun, tolerates part shade.
SOIL: Moist, well-drained.
PROPAGATION: Cuttings

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Courtesy of Brookside Gardens

Osmanthus hetrophyllus 'Goshiki'

***Osmanthus heterophyllus* 'Goshiki'** is an evergreen shrub with unique, colorful leaves. The new growth is pink-tinged, maturing to green with splashes of cream and gold. Commonly called false-holly, 'Goshiki' has spiny-pointed holly-like leaves that trick people into thinking it is a real holly. It blooms in September through October. Its creamy white flowers are hidden but very fragrant.

Imported from Japan in 1979 by Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, Maryland, 'Goshiki' exhibits greater winter-hardiness than other variegated forms of *Osmanthus heterophyllus*. Some winter protection is advised. In the Philadelphia area, there may be some winter die-back of young foliage, but don't worry—trim it away. 'Goshiki' will grow out of it.

Phil Normandy, Plant Collections Manager of Brookside Gardens, comments on 'Goshiki', "Its habit is dense and billowy, withstanding shearing if a more formal effect is desired. Pruning would render it perfectly suitable for low hedges."

SIZE: 5'H x 4'W.
HARDINESS: Zone 6 to 9.
LIGHT: Any light but best in part-shade.
SOIL: Moist, well-drained.
PROPAGATION: Cuttings



Sarcococca hookeriana var. *humilis* (Sweetbox)

Larry Albee



SIZE: 3'H x 5'W.
HARDINESS: Zone 5 to 8.
LIGHT: Part-shade to shade.
SOIL: Moist, well-drained.
PROPAGATION: Cuttings

***Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* (Sweetbox)** is a spreading evergreen shrub with a low, mounding habit. Its narrow dark-green leaves create a lush groundcover. The plant has a neat, attractive appearance that is enhanced in March and April by small, white, very fragrant flowers. It's also excellent as a *Pachysandra* replacement, low foundation plant, or companion plant for perennials.

A note about siting: *Sarcococca*, as well as many other broadleaf evergreens, can be sensitive to the strong winter sun of a southern exposure. Fortunately, *Sarcococca hookeriana* var. *humilis* is less sensitive to this problem than the straight species. When planting a broadleaf evergreen, however, a site protected from winter sun is the best choice.

Remember that bare area in shade or part-shade, under a window, next to your patio, or at the edge of the walkway where you've wanted to plant something for some time, but didn't know what? Well, now you do—*Sarcococca* is the plant.

Finding Gold Medal Plants

Gold Medal plants are known to be pest and disease resistant. They also require little maintenance, and exhibit desirable characteristics throughout the seasons. Fortunately, they are available at many garden centers and retail nurseries. Take our list with you when you go plant hunting. View mature specimens at area arboretums and gardens, usually nestled among companion plants. This is a great way to get some ideas about use in your own garden.

Gardens and arboretums with great selections of Gold Medal Plants are:

- Chanticleer, Wayne, PA
- Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown, NJ
- Longwood Gardens, Kennett Square, PA
- Morris Arboretum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA
- Scott Arboretum in Swarthmore, PA.

For more information, please call or write:
Gold Medal Plants
The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
100 N. 20th St., 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1495
215-988-8774
email: *goldmedal@pennhort.org*



Mayapple *(Podophyllum peltatum)*



Skunk cabbage *(Symplocarpus foetidus)*

the secret life of wildflowers

by Stanley J. Miller, Jr., Ph.D.

"Each humblest plant, or weed, as we call it, stands there to express some thought or mood of ours, and yet how long it stands in vain! I have walked these Great Fields so many Augusts and never yet distinctly recognized these purple companions that I have there. I have brushed against them and trampled them down, forsooth, and now at last they have, as it were, risen up and blessed me I may say that I never saw them before, or can only recall a dim vision of them, and now wherever I go I hardly see anything else. It is the reign and presidence only of the andropogons."

—Henry David Thoreau
A Writer's Journal (1858)





Top:
Doll's eyes
(Actaea pachypoda)

Bottom:
Rabbit-foot clover
(Trifolium arvense)

Thoreau suggests what, for me, is the allure of photographing wildflowers—the chance to see in detail and share the hidden life of these ever-present but often unnoticed inhabitants of woodlands and meadows.

I began taking pictures of wildflowers about 30 years ago, after accompanying my four sons on a fishing trip to a Radnor Township park—somewhat inappropriately named Skunk Hollow. While watching the boys, who were busy extricating their hooks from streamside bushes and removing sunfish from their lines, I vaguely noticed a lot of flowers around our feet. Since the fishing was not very profitable, we all agreed to go home to pursue other ventures.

But I returned to Skunk Hollow and began to examine more closely what I had seen on the ground. This time, I, not the fish, was hooked. Since then, I have returned hundreds of times to Skunk Hollow to photograph wildflowers and am constantly adding new places to my list.

The wildflower season in southeastern Pennsylvania begins in late January, with the arrival of **skunk cabbage** (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) in damp, marshy areas, frequently beside streams. It often blooms before, during, or after snowfalls. This plant's own metabolism generates enough heat to melt the surrounding snow. The flowering part is a knob-like spadix hidden in the overarching spathe, and the flowering plant is 3 to 6 inches tall. Flies, attracted by the malodorous aroma, serve as its pollinating agents. Its name derives from the Greek *symploke* and *carpos*, meaning connected fruit, and from the Latin *foetidus*, meaning foul smelling. The offensive smell emanates







Top right: Wild lily-of-the-valley
(Maianthemum canadense)

Top left and inset: Partridgeberry
(Mitchella repens)

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"How much virtue there is in simply seeing,"

Henry David Thoreau,
A Writer's Journal



Top: Common milkweed *(Asclepias syriaca)*
Bottom: Spring beauty *(Claytonia virginica)*

from the crushed leaves—an aroma Native Americans believed was a remedy for headaches.

In early spring in woods, fields, meadows and clearings, we find small white, pink-and-white, or pink flowers blooming in the sunlight. Their wonderful, delicate scent attracts deer, sheep and, in other areas, moose and elk. These are the **spring beauties** (*Claytonia virginica*), which open only in the sunlight and close up at the end of each day. Because the flowers are quite tiny (3/4-inch across), the intricate patterns of stripes on the petals are almost invisible unless closely examined or magnified. The spring beauty grows from an edible tuber which tastes like a radish if eaten raw, or like baked potatoes or chestnuts if cooked.

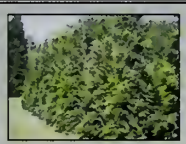
Viewing wildflowers up close offers the fascinating opportunity to look inside the bloom and discover what will become of the plant as it continues to develop. In late April and early May, the **mayapple** (*Podophyllum peltatum*) appears in woods and adjoining fields. If we peek inside the flower, we can see the fruit beginning to take shape.

Mayapple grows about 12 to 18 inches tall and the flower is about 2 inches wide. The botanical name, from the Greek, refers to the leaf shape. Literally, *Podophyllum* spells out "duck-foot leaf." The plants do not branch or flower until their second year or later. Substances extracted from the mayapple are effective in treating genital warts, small-cell cancer, testicular cancer and leukemia. The apple is edible, but not tasty. The remainder of the plant is poisonous if eaten in large quantities, although Native Americans used the boiled leaves as a cathartic (and lived).

Another May-blooming plant is **doll's eyes** (*Actaea pachypoda*), which is found in woods and thickets. This plant, 1 to 2 1/2

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Top: Honeysuckle flowers *(Lonicera japonica)*

inches tall, is noteworthy for its very attractive seeds that resemble a doll's eyes—clusters of shiny white berries topped by a purplish-black spot. While attractive, the berries are very poisonous, containing a glycoside, and ingestion causes severe vomiting and dizziness. We can't forget that these plants are, after all, *wild* flowers or as the French call them, *Plantes sauvages.* Innocent in appearance they may be, but their looks can be deceiving.

Occasionally one comes upon a surprise package in the wild. A close look at **rabbit-foot clover** (*Trifolium arvense*) was one such experience for me. From my standing position I saw an inconspicuous mass of grayish, fuzzy material down on the ground. Peering at a single specimen through a camera lens revealed a stunning combination of green and pink. The plant grows from May through October along roadsides, in waste areas and fields, and from a distance offers no clues to its beauty.

Similarly, the berries of the **wild lily-of-the-valley** (*Maianthemum canadense*) have an unprepossessing, dull color seen from above. But at ground level and through a magnifying glass, one sees lovely, speckled, reddish-brown seeds. Like doll's eyes, this beauty is also poisonous if ingested.

The seed-producing process of wildflowers often goes unnoticed. The flowers of **partridgeberry** (*Mitchella repens*), for example, occur in pairs fused at the base. The fruit is formed by the fusion of the two ovaries to produce one red, edible berry with two scars, hence its other common name: two-eyed berry. Although the flowers come in pairs, they are not identical. One has a long pistil and short stamens, while the other has short pistils and long stamens. Both flowers require fertilization for berry production.

Some flowers in the wild appear to have been posed or staged, such as the almost military appearance of honeysuckle flowers (*Lonicera japonica*), which seem to be standing at attention. We know this plant as a rambling vine, often 25 to 30 feet in length, a favorite of children for the won-

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derful sweet syrup sucked from the sweet-smelling blooms. Some claim anti-viral and cholesterol-lowering capabilities for honeysuckle extracts. Conversely, it is also considered an invasive nuisance in many states.

As fall approaches, plants begin to focus their efforts on seed production and distribution. Some simply drop their seeds to the ground, while others count on birds and animals for a ride. The **common milkweed** (*Asclepias syriaca*) uses wind as its conveyance, producing seeds well adapted to airy distribution. A common sight in the woods and fields in late summer and early fall, milkweed pods burst and the seeds emerge in masses.

A photographer might magnify just one milkweed seed against a black background, creating an image that sparks the imagination—resembling anything from Fourth-of-July fireworks to a hummingbird in flight. This is, for me, part of the thrill and magic of wildflower photography.

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What do Landscape Architects **Really** do?

By Kathryn Newland



John Gonnon

Homeowners are sometimes intimidated by the job title "landscape architect." What exactly does one do? A lot, actually. Let's say that you want answers about how best to design and use your outdoor environment, be it your lawn, patio, pool or driveway. Designing a property's physical characteristics requires careful study, planning, and a good sense of design. There are often large issues to deal with, such as drainage, how to best use outdoor living areas, and what plants to choose. Landscape architects have a combination of expertise and experience to take your ideas from the drawing board to installation in the ground.

Let's learn more about the world of the professional landscape architect and find out if one is right for your residential design project.

DO I NEED A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT?

Planning a landscape is just as important as designing a well-functioning building. Landscape architects have both practical knowledge and creative abilities to develop a design and illustrate it in such a way that helps you imagine how your landscape will look. A number of other landscape professionals have some combination of similar knowledge and skills, but not the complete package that a landscape architect brings. Here are four related professionals with a brief summary of what they offer:

LANDSCAPE GARDENER

A landscape gardener usually has extensive knowledge of gardening practices, plants, and plant requirements, and this expertise is their strength. If your plans include a three-level deck, however, you'd need someone with construction experience. But if your plan is 100% garden-oriented, then a landscape gardener might be a good choice.

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER

A landscape designer has knowledge of gardening practices, plant requirements, and as their name suggests, they also can design a garden. They may not be as experienced, however, in the nuts and bolts of soil science, water and drainage issues, or engineering principles. If you have a gnarly erosion problem or a damp backyard, you'll want someone with more technical and engineering abilities. But if you want a garden and, say, a small patio, a landscape designer could do the job fine.

LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

A landscape contractor knows about landscape installation and/or maintenance. They usually know plants, as well as construction practices, but aren't as strong in the creative design process. Go with a landscape contractor only if they have a landscape designer or landscape architect on staff to design what you want.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Landscape architects provide clients with comprehensive, soup-to-nuts services for almost any outdoor project, large or small. Think about what you want to accomplish and ask yourself if a landscape architect is the best fit. The above choices are fine, too, but if your project involves any combination of plants and hardscape construction, this might be the way to go.

HOW DO I HIRE A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT?

If you decide that you really want to have a landscape architect, check first with friends and colleagues who have used a landscape architect's services. Or you can find them under "landscape architects" in the Yellow Pages. Like house and building architects, landscape architects have passed a rigorous licensing exam and are either "registered" or "certified," depending on the state. In Pennsylvania, they are registered landscape architects (RLA); in New Jersey, they are certified landscape architects (CLA). Professional organizations can identify their members who specialize in your area of need (See a listing of landscape architectural trade associations at the end of this article).

At your first meeting, it's most important to see "before and after" photos of completed projects, or better yet, go see a property the landscape architect has designed. If they have proven experience on a project similar to yours, that's invaluable. During an interview, you might ask questions such as:

- What is your design process when working with a client?
- What drawings and cost estimates will you provide?
- What is the fee for your services?
- What is the usual form of agreement or contract you require?
- How much time will this project take?

SCOPE OF WORK

A "scope of work" outlines what the landscape architect will do for you. Here's a sample scope of work to give you an idea of what services they might propose:

- Meet to discuss your needs and ideas.
- Conduct a site survey and generate a base map showing existing conditions, i.e., where the house, trees, paths, etc.; are located.
- Develop preliminary design concepts (1 to 3 versions depending on your budget).
- Meet to discuss your likes and dislikes and choose a direction for the landscape design.
- Refine design concept into a final design, based on comments from meeting.
- Generate the following drawings that can be used for construction:

 1. **Dimensioned plan** that shows grades; extent of planting; and site features such as paths, walls, and structures;

 2. **Section/elevation drawings** that show elevations of landscape design as necessary;

 3. **Detail drawings** that show enlarged versions of design details such as paths, walls, etc.;

 4. **Plant lists** that include both botanical and common plant names with numbers of each, size and type of plant, spacing, and relevant comments.

- Meet to determine best course of action for installation, and generate construction specifications if necessary.
- Develop a maintenance plan for long-term stewardship of your new landscape.

Information

American Society of Landscape Architects
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www.asla.org

ASLA Pennsylvania/ Delaware chapter
908 North Second Street
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Rob Cardillo

Look for a professional who listens well, seems open to your ideas, and has done previous work that appeals to you.

One way to choose between two potential landscape architects is to ask for a "proposal for services." This proposal can give you a clear, written explanation of what the landscape architect will do for you and should include a detailed "scope of work," or outline of the services provided, schedule, completion date, and fee (can be on a per hour or lump sum basis, usually 12-15% of the entire project's cost). See sidebar on page 29 for a typical scope of work. A proposal, if accepted in whole or part, can easily serve as an agreement before any work starts.

HOW DO I GET THE MOST VALUE OUT OF MY LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT?

Be frank about how much money you want to spend. Be clear about how you want to use the landscape, particularly how much time you can devote to caring for it. Be sure you understand what's being proposed and ask questions until you're satisfied that you know the look and feel of the landscape design, so that few changes will have to be made later on. Remember that you've hired the landscape architect for their professional expertise, so it's best to trust his or her judgment to design your outdoor environment to suit both your budget and your needs.

Once the design is complete, a landscape architect can supervise construction of your garden by other professionals. This is the best scenario if you can afford it, because there's more chance the installation will honor the design and give you the look you're expecting. When this isn't possible, your landscape architect may have experience with one or two landscape contractors whom they know you can rely on for installation, even without his or her direct supervision.

Once the landscape is installed, it's crucial to create a plan for ongoing care (maintenance should have been an important consideration of the design). Depending on the size of your property, extent of the plantings, and available budget, you may decide to hire a contractor (i.e., a "lawn service") to care for all or part of your new landscape, such as mowing, mulching, and weeding. Whether you hire a professional or do the work entirely on your own, a set of maintenance guidelines and a schedule are crucial to keep your property looking good. While this is not typically part of a landscape architect's work, they can help you work out a plan if you request it.

Once all the work is completed, there's only one thing left to do—throw a party! Invite everyone you know to come admire the beautiful outdoor environment you created, working together with your landscape architect. In fact, make it an annual event so that each year you can share the beauty and mark the growth and vitality of your landscape.

Kathryn Newland practices landscape architecture as an associate director in PHS's Philadelphia Green program, wherein she manages the Public Landscapes department.

Slides courtesy of Piedmont Designs, Kimberton, PA



Above: A residential entryway before and after renovation.

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Using Yellow & Gold in the Garden

BY NANCY J. ONDRA •



Above: *Asperula orientalis* in bloom in left half; *Caryopteris* 'Worcester Gold' foliage on right.

Right: *Rosa glauca* in bloom at top, then *Berberis thunbergii* 'Aurea' on right middle above *Carex muskingumensis* 'Oehme'. *Cryptotaenia japonica* 'Purpurea' sits at the bottom middle, *Euphorbia* 'Chameleon' at bottom left, then *Euphorbia palustris* on middle left.



Photography by Nancy Ondra



Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design (Saxon Holt Pub.)

When it comes to adding long-lasting beauty to beds and borders, colorful leaves simply can't be beat. And of all the various foliage colors, yellows or golds are perhaps the most likely to elicit a dramatic response from visitors to your garden. The exact nature of that response depends on personal tastes, of course. Some people love the way golden foliage combines with other colors to create vivid contrasts, while others think it just looks sickly. While the latter group *does* have a point—yellowing foliage *can* be a sign of nutrient deficiencies—it's certainly possible to use yellow-leaved plants in a way that makes them look deliberate and cared-for, and not just testaments to poor fertilizing practices.

First, be aware that there are many different kinds of golden foliage, ranging from chartreuse (greenish-yellow) to brassy (orange-yellow) with clear, pure yellow in between. The exact kind of yellow you're dealing with depends on the plant itself, as well as on the season and the amount of light the plant gets. Some cultivars, such as golden wood millet (*Milium effusum* 'Aureum'), are bright yellow in spring, then fade to a peaked-looking pale green by midsummer. If that bothers you, try a more consistently golden plant, such as the amazing *Tradescantia* 'Sweet Kate'. It looks fantastic from the time it emerges in spring until it's nipped by fall frosts.

Providing the right light is also critical to getting the best out of yellow foliage. Some selections bleach out to a pale yellow-green, or even turn crispy brown, in strong sun—as with 'All Gold' lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis* 'All Gold'), for instance—while others demand as much sun as you can give them to develop their richest color (*Origanum vulgare* 'Aureum' is just one example). So if you have a yellow-leaved plant that just doesn't look right where it's growing, try moving it to a spot with more or less light.

Creating exciting combinations with yellow-leaved plants is practically a no-brainer. To start with, they are perfect partners for blue and purple flowers. In fact, you can often find that exact combination in a single plant; besides the aforementioned *Tradescantia* 'Sweet Kate', check out *Caryopteris* 'Worcester Gold', *Centaurea montana* 'Gold Bullion', and *Veronica prostrata* 'Aztec Gold'.

Yellow foliage paired with pink flowers is not a combination everyone enjoys, but apparently it appeals to Mother Nature, since she's provided us with that very combination in many spirea selections, as well as in golden bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis* 'Goldheart') and golden four-o'-clocks (*Mirabilis jalapa* 'Limelight'). For an even richer contrast, try yellow-leaved plants with red flowers, such as *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Aurea', 'Tip Top Mahogany' nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*), and 'Sun Bright' runner bean (*Phaseolus coccineus*).

Yellow leaves also make excellent bedmates for maroon, purple, black, and dark green foliage. You might, for instance, pair the grassy, golden foliage of *Liriope muscari* 'Pee Dee Gold Ingot' with the broad, chocolate brown leaves of × *Heucherella* 'Burnished Bronze'. Or, try the ever-gold tufts of golden wood rush (*Luzula sylvatica* 'Aurea') as an underplanting for deep green *Helleborus foetidus* to create an eye-catching winter combination.







Top: Bronze-leaved, red-stemmed chard (I grew as 'Rhubarb', but it looks more like 'Vulcan') in center; *Fuchsia magellanica* 'Aurea' in lower left; *Amaranthus caudatus* in upper left.

Middle: *Anthriscus* 'Ravenswing' foliage in top half; *Milium effusum* 'Aureum' foliage at lower left, with bright yellow viola at lower right.

Bottom: *Melissa officinalis* 'All Gold' in foreground; *Atriplex hortensis rubra* on left; *Alopecurus pratensis* 'Variegata' in center; mini rose 'Crimson Knight' above that; *Helleborus foetidus* foliage at top; *Alchemilla mollis* foliage at right edge.

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Revering the Viola

BY MARILYN ROMENESKO •

On a beautiful fall day last year, a tractor-trailer full of Canadian-grown pansies (*Viola* × *wittrockiana*) and violas (*Viola* × *hybrida*) arrived at Penn's Landing. Staff from PHS's Philadelphia Green program were preparing to plant them both there and at the "cover parks" that span over I-95. When the truck driver threw open the doors of the trailer, the fragrance of the flowers inside was so intense, so sweet and so wonderful that I could barely think about the vibrant colors, let alone the amount of effort it would take to get those 10,000 plants into the ground.

This was a very different fall planting for me because I was accustomed to using pansies as a primary bedding plant. While pansies are quite showy, their cousin, the *Viola*, is a bit taller (8 inches tall by 12 inches wide), very vigorous and much more floriferous. These smaller-flowered members of the VIOLACEAE family were great companions to the pansies, and I now think of the viola as the better of the two for fall-through-spring color.

By late spring, the violas were a mass of color, whereas some of the foliage still showed through the floral display of pansy plantings. In mid-May, just when these pansies and violas are at their best, they are usually removed to make way for summer bedding plants, since they become quite leggy with just a few weeks of hot weather.

Last fall, I could find only one variety of viola from nearby vendors. I used 'Penny Primrose' and was very impressed with its performance. As for pansies, a mixture called Ultima Lavender Shades worked beautifully. This color blend looked especially attractive combined with the chartreuse of early-spring tree and shrub foliage.





Photos courtesy of Fernlea Flowers, Ltd.

Pansies and violas come in numerous colors including white, purple, gold, blue shades, lavender shades, primrose yellow, cream, red, orange, black and various bi-colors. Some have dark blotches in their centers, while others have black striped markings on a small yellow background, or "faces." Pansies and violas can be perennial with a great deal of coddling, but they are mostly grown as annuals. Most do not breed true by self seeding.

Pansies and violas are a great alternative to the short-lived fall mums and the static foliage of ornamental cabbage and kale. They provide color much longer, too—up to seven months under good conditions when planted in the fall in the Delaware Valley. Green industry professionals recommend planting pansies and violas two months before the freezing weather stops root growth. In our area, early October is relatively safe, but these plants can be planted until the end of October and will form roots if the freezing weather holds off until January.

So try some violas with your pansies this fall. They'll make your gardens vibrant and colorful through the fall, winter, and spring.



A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program, Marilyn Romenesko is a trained horticulturalist and ISA-certified arborist. She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.

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TOOLS of the TRADE

PHS's Philadelphia Green program works hard to empower community residents to transform vacant land, create thriving gardens, and rejuvenate neighborhood parks. Sometimes this involves lugging a lot of gear around, much of which is eventually donated to the community.

Pictured here is Philadelphia Green staff member Keith Green, along with the amazing arsenal of equipment he uses to help keep the city beautiful.



Not a real tre

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Keith Green is a project coordinator for Philadelphia Green. Among his many accomplishments, Keith has helped several Philadelphia communities create wonderful gardens and beautify neighborhood blocks with new trees and colorful containers.

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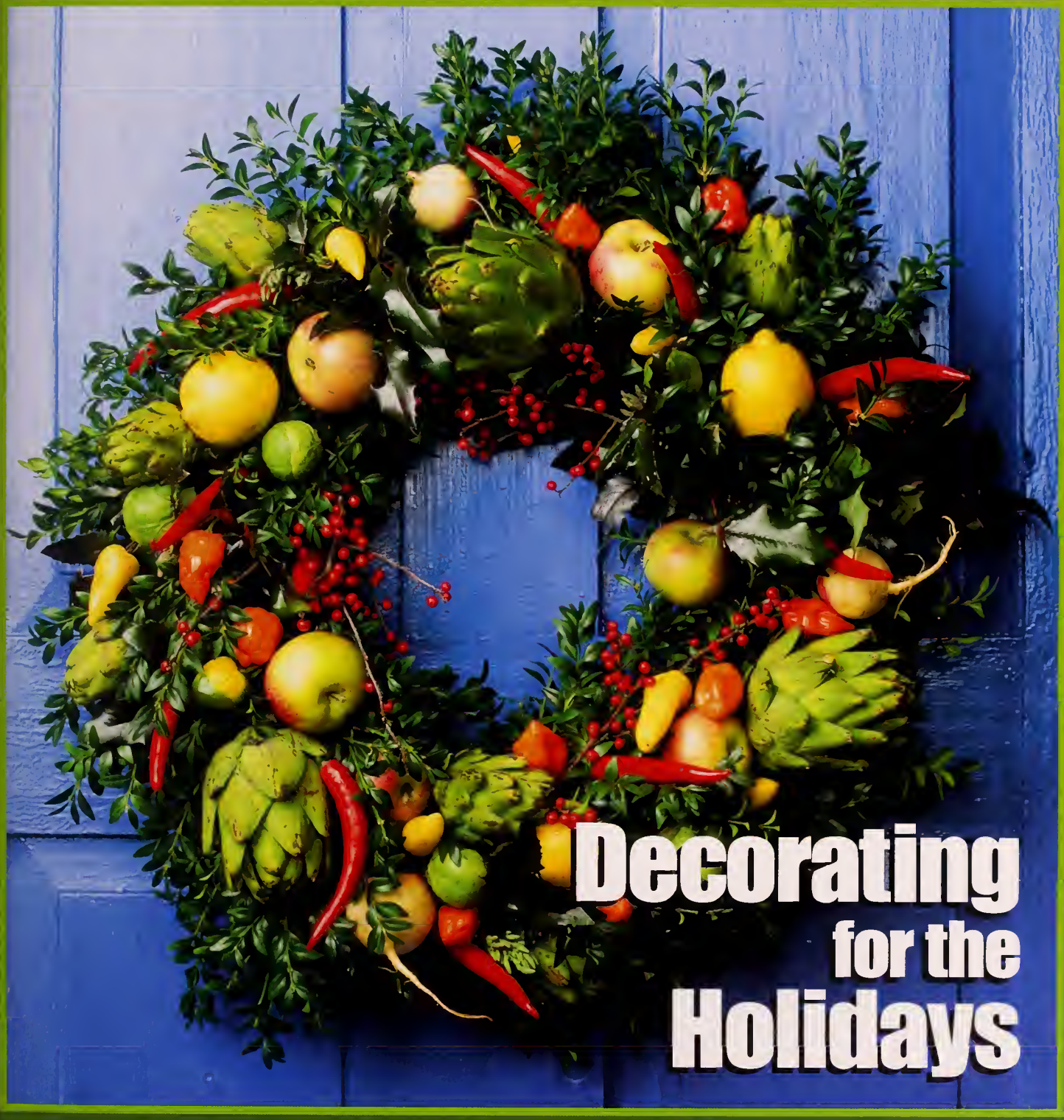
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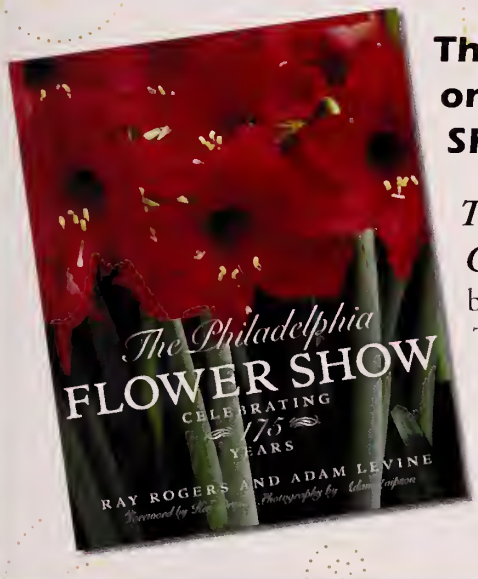
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The avalanche of the holiday season is fast upon us and, besides eggnog, nothing makes a party more festive than the fine touch of timely decorations. Using all-natural materials—from white pine and holly to clementines and cranberries—author Ellen Spector Platt transforms a 19th-century house into a wintry wonder.

18 Bonsai 101

Ever wonder how they create the amazing bonsai trees you've seen at the Philadelphia Flower Show and beyond? If so, then read on. The art of *bonsai* demands skill and practice, but believe it or not, you can get started down this venerable path without too much fuss or expense. In this how-to article, discover the basics of creating a bonsai mostly using tools lying around your garden shed.

24 Planting a City

How far does $4 million go in the world of "greening"? Since the summer, PHS has been working under a one-year city contract to transform Philadelphia's vacant land into green spaces, improve parks and neighborhood commercial districts, create new gardeners and gardens, and hold horticulture workshops across the city. Jane Carroll looks at this innovative project and the amazing amount of work accomplished thus far.

28 Salad Daze

From the kitchens of the Four Seasons Hotel and other high-end Philadelphia restaurants to their counterparts in New York City, chefs just can't get enough of the organic specialty salad greens that come out of Blue Moon Acres. PHS president Jane Pepper visits this seven-acre farm tucked away in Bucks County and takes us inside the realm of "micro-greens."

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The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society motivates people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture.

Cover photo by Alan and Linda Detrick

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GREEN scene

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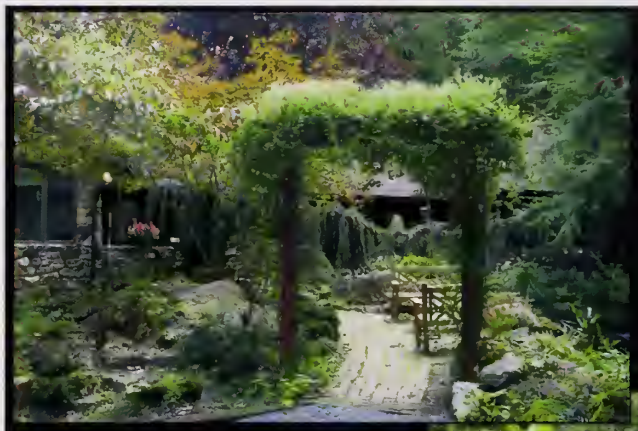
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Lasting Lessons

Bonsai *[pronounced "bone-sigh"]* is one of those areas of horticulture with a tremendous amount of mystique surrounding it, and, as such, can seem daunting to newcomers. I ventured into this field after winning a Japanese maple at a local auction five years ago. Since then, I've been dabbling with this venerable art form at my leisure (loosely translated as "torturing small trees on the weekends").

Witnessing the amazing exhibits at the Philadelphia Flower Show by the Pennsylvania Bonsai Society and others has only increased my appetite for bonsai, and lately I've been haunting the stacks at the McLean Library, signing out every related book and video we possess. But if I were going to get serious about it, I reasoned, a bit of formal training was in order, at least before I tortured any more small trees into an early grave.

Figuring that it's best to start at the top, I signed up for an all-day workshop at the renowned Rosade Bonsai Studio, just north of New Hope, PA. As I quickly learned, there's nothing like seeing a master at work firsthand. Chase Rosade is a world-class bonsai artist who's been exhibiting his work at the Flower Show since the early 1970s. When he's not at his nursery or teaching classes, Chase is often traveling the world giving lectures at bonsai conventions or judging competitions.

Half of the workshop was not taught by Chase, but by his wife Solita, a serious bonsai artist in her own right. A large part of the day was spent hearing "Soli" lecture on bonsai basics. She strongly emphasized the spiritual elements of bonsai design, since artists often use triangle shapes on their trees to connote heaven, man and earth. Also, when determining which side of a tree should be the front, she suggested that we look for the side where the tree's crown leans forward—"a bonsai tree should bow towards you as a sign of respect," she told us. Also illuminating was her guided tour of the Rosades' combined collection, highlighted by Chase's magnificent pines and junipers and by her own tropical bonsai, many from her native Colombia.

After lunch, Chase came in for his section of the workshop: a hands-on styling of a bonsai. We students quickly got out of our seats to watch him work up close. He first demonstrated how to repot an indoor ficus tree and wire the branches. After several decades of creating bonsai, Chase works very rapidly, using a root hook to scrape the soil off the base and then re-wiring the plant into its new pot in just a few minutes. He's equally fast with wiring. Just as an orthodontist uses braces to push teeth in a particular direction, so too does the bonsai artist use soft copper or aluminum wire to dramatically shape branches. With a little final clipping of branches, Chase transformed this once-shabby ficus into an attractive miniature tree in about 20 minutes.

Next it was our turn. We each picked out a potted juniper (*Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana') to begin styling. Each student got to work quickly, turning the container around to find where the front of the bonsai might lie. Once the front was determined, we had to decide on a style—since mine had a long, dramatic branch tilted towards top of the plant, the "slant style" seemed an obvious choice.

Next, the process of cutting away excess branches began. All around the room, you could see the scraggly shrubs turning into tiny trees. Chase offered tips and, at times, helped wire a particularly stubborn branch. Soli helped a student who was working on a ficus, since he was an apartment dweller who didn't have the means to maintain an outdoor bonsai. Finally, they walked us through the all-important potting process, and we were all pleased with our respective bonsai creations. As seen in the photo below, this tree was a vast improvement over any I had previously completed, a direct benefit of that day's classroom training. (For more basic bonsai tips, see the article on page 18.)

My message here is that while being a self-taught gardener is wonderful, a little formal training now and then can really help hone one's skills. If this applies to you, you might consider taking a workshop in your area of horticultural interest, whether it's bonsai, perennials, water gardening or whatever. You can look in the *PHS News* and on our new website (*www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org*) for any number of useful garden activities. Also check in with other local garden groups to see what they're offering.

As I found out at the Rosade Bonsai Studio, a little time "in school" paid swift dividends for my latest gardening obsession.



Pete Brown
email: *greenscene@pennhort.org*

The Garden Sprinkler Revisited

I became infatuated with old garden sprinklers about 15 years ago, when I purchased a Sears metal sprinkler for $5 at a flea market. I used the thing all those years without knowing it was a collectible. Finally, after my children hijacked my plastic water-pistol collection, I made good on threats to begin hoarding sprinklers.

I knew there were all kinds of sprinklers out there, but I have been amazed at the engineering, design, and marketing efforts invested in a simple device used to distribute water over a lawn. The 1800s saw great advancements in pressurized water systems, and the first fire-suppression sprinkler system for buildings was invented in 1874. Sprinklers for lawn and agricultural use seemed to follow these milestones, and by the 1890s, quite a few companies were mass-producing them.

For the next four or five decades, sprinklers appeared in a dizzying array of metals, shapes and sizes, coinciding with fast-growing interest in gardening and the importance of the lawn to the new suburban developments. After World War II and certainly by the late 1950s, many manufacturers shifted to plastics and lightweight tubular metals. The conversion to cheaper materials—and the fascination with air and space travel during that period—resulted in some interesting designs and colors. But sprinkler design generally began a downward spiral, and late twentieth-century ones lack the craftsmanship or heft of the older metal examples.

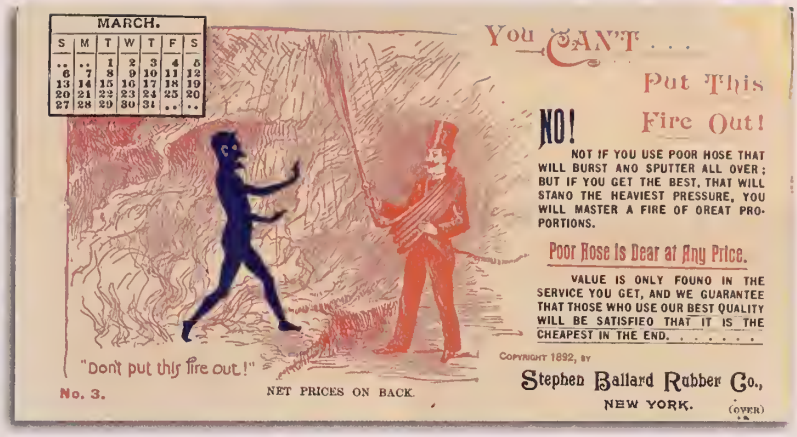


A clown sprinkler made of painted sheet metal (c. 1937).

Now well into its second year, my collection of 60+ vintage sprinklers focuses on styles created from about 1890 to 1950. A neighboring couple—avid garage-sale shoppers—often stop by with a new find picked up for a few dollars. But I've found many rare and valuable sprinklers on online auctions such as eBay, which, after all, is just one big, nationwide garage sale. Good vintage sprinklers can run from $30 to $80, and the better ones fetch $200 to $500 or more. A recent "published" sprinkler (with a *catalog raisonne*, as said in the art world) sold for over $2,250.

Almost without thinking, I began to treat the collection as any curator would, cataloging and numbering new additions and tracking sources, origins, cost and brands. I've also begun a related collection of period advertising, including ads extolling the virtues and modern advances of a particular sprinkler to postcards with racy "pin-up" illustrations of models in the garden.

As with any collectible item, original finishes, working condition and





Above: Sprinkler advertisements from the turn of the century (the top ad dates from 1898).
Below: The author's son gets cooled by a vintage favorite.

uniqueness all contribute to a sprinkler's worth. The value is higher when the design appeals to an audience beyond just sprinkler collectors (yes, it was a great relief to realize there are others). For example, many collectors of black Americana, decoys or cast iron also seek out rare sprinklers.

A concerned friend, hearing that I rarely hook my sprinklers up to a hose for fear they would get wet, felt sad for me and described my obsession as "worse than he had thought." But, he'll cheer up when, one hot day, I finally throw that big sprinkler party!

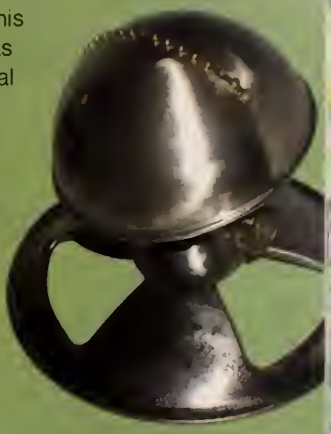
—Andy Durham, RLA



Photos by Andy Durham

SPRINKLERS Through the Ages

Dubbed "chrome dome," this model has cast-metal works under its hood.





Standing 28 inches tall, this statuesque beauty was patented in 1891.

Every collection seems to have "Bug Eyes" (right) and a few "walking tractors" (below). Yes, they move!







Olivia Lehman

A Gardening Whirlwind...at 79!

Peggy Steinman lives with her daughter Margaret in Belmont Village, Philadelphia. Their tucked-away hamlet, just off the Schuylkill Expressway and down the road from the Mann Music Center in Fairmount Park, is made up of a collection of older, spacious row homes built in either Mediterranean or Tudor style.

Having grown up on 100 acres in Villanova, Peggy caught the gardening bug early. "My mother had a formal garden," she says. "But her idea of gardening was pulling out some weeds and letting someone else pick them up."

At the age of 79, Peggy possesses an unusual amount of energy. She moved to Belmont Village four years ago and transformed it by establishing flower beds, planting trees, gardening wine barrels, erecting fences, removing concrete and, in general, creating delicious, horticultural havoc throughout the neighborhood. This past season, Peggy grew 75% of her flowers from seed; her periwinkle lobelias with their powdery blueness are unforgettable. She also built a potting bench and table, too.

All this activity has been inspired not just by a love of gardening, but also by her love for her daughter, a busy physician and artist who has lived in Belmont village for 12 years. "After my husband died, I moved here to be close to Margaret," Peggy explains. "I wanted to create a beautiful environment for both of us and for our neighbors."

Because of the time constraints of her work and a physical condition that sometimes limits activity, Margaret doesn't garden herself. Yet she benefits from the floral world her mother has created around her. "My mother has always tried to enrich my life, always making sure there was green around me, because she knows it affects the way a child sees the world."

So far in her neighborhood, Peggy has planted two cutleaf maples, one espaliered pear tree, two river birches, a beech, a tulip poplar, a weeping cherry, a dwarf pine, a dwarf peach, four arborvitae, a dogwood, and many flowers and bulbs. She enjoys doing the labor herself rather than hiring someone else to do it, because the pursuit seems to play against her "fancy lady" appearance.

Peggy enjoys shocking people. A favorite gardening story occurred one spring. Earlier that year, she had secretly planted a flowerbed for a neighbor, using a lot of spring-flowering bulbs. When the whole tableau popped up unexpectedly one day, the man was surprised by its beauty and grateful to Peggy for all her work. So, very early on the morning that he discovered his new garden, the happy neighbor joyfully accosted Steinman on the street as she was taking her dog out for a stroll. *"It's beautiful, it's beautiful!,"* he loudly proclaimed to a startled Peggy. This time, a gardener who likes to shock got shocked back.

—Olivia Lehman

Turning "Pink"

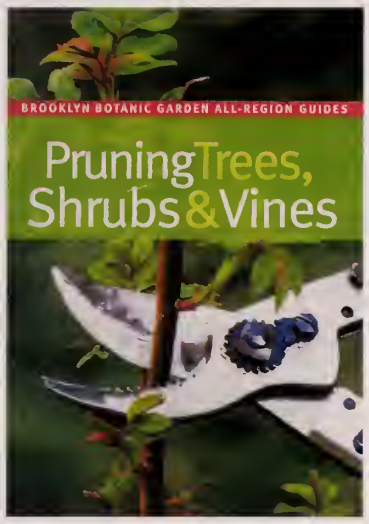
In regard to our pink daffodil article from the October issue (page 8), PHS member and noted bulb expert Kathryn Andersen wrote in with some corrections:

"First, the color pink does not occur in all 13 divisions of daffodils (I know of none in 9, 10, 12 or 13). Also, 'Mrs. R.O. Backhouse' was introduced sometime prior to 1921—not 1923. Furthermore, the true cultivar is just about impossible to come by today. The Dutch substitute almost any pink on hand for this one. (I once saw a display of over 1,000 pink bulbs labeled 'Mrs. R.O. Backhouse' in an historic park in Belfast that had just been ordered in from Holland. Unfortunately, they were most likely 'Salome'.)

"Finally, pink daffodils generally bloom later than other colors do, and modern ones open in pink, not yellow. So unless Easter and Passover come in mid-April or later, there will be no pink flowers for the dinner table."

THE GARDENER'S BOOKSHELF

by Nancy Q. O'Donnell



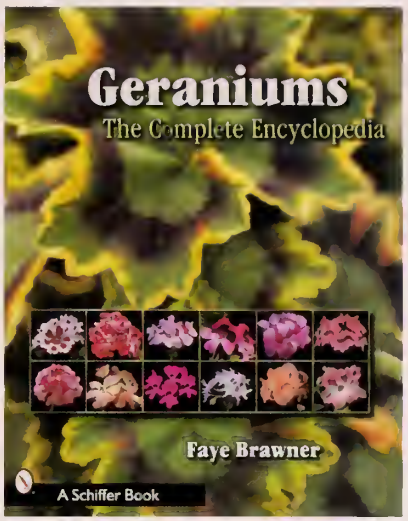
Pruning Trees, Shrubs & Vines

by Karen Davis Cutker

(Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 119 pages)

This slim volume contains everything you always wanted to know about the confusing topic of pruning, but were afraid to ask. Even accomplished gardeners shrink from it because of the vagaries of plant growth within a given genus. Do you have to prune a hydrangea? A viburnum? Well, what kind? This book clarifies the how and the why, using clear illustrations and no-nonsense writing. It shows exactly how, and how not, to make proper pruning cuts to achieve the desired effect.

The book includes a plant-by-plant guide to pruning shrubs, trees, vines and conifers and devotes a special section to the two trickiest classes to prune—roses and clematis. It clearly lists and groups the varieties and gives the correct timing and approach. Special techniques such as pleaching, espaliering, and coppicing are covered as well, taking the mystery out of these more challenging practices. If you can't prune your plants correctly using this book as a guide, go back to mowing the lawn.



Geraniums: The Complete Encyclopedia

by Faye Brawner

(Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 176 pages)

This serious and comprehensive look at the world of geraniums is destined to be the definitive word on the genus *Pelargonium* for years to come. Each variety has its own a chapter—10 in all—with a listing and description of the various cultivars. The stunning photographs that accompany the text are very carefully composed, many against a black background, a technique that highlights the variety of flower and leaf colors and shapes. It's an added delight that the varieties have such elevated names as Regal, Angel and Stellar.

The chapter on scented geraniums is particularly fascinating. Most readers will be surprised that geranium leaves can smell not only like rose, mint, and lemon, but also nutmeg, chocolate, cinnamon, and coconut. The author devotes the final chapters to the more mundane stuff, such as propagation, cultural techniques, pests, and diseases. Coming after pages and pages of saturated color photos, the "just the facts" information is tough going—more illustrations in this section would have livened things up a bit.

One more quibble: I wish the book were titled after the name of the genus, *Pelargonium*, rather than the popular name. A thorough and scholarly book like this needs a proper name to match, at least to avoid continuing that age-old confusion.



Winter Wonderland

A Gardener's Tips for Holiday Cheer

Story by
Ellen Spector Platt
Photography by
Alan & Linda Detrick

Opposite page: Concolor fir decorated with dried pepper 'Tanaka', *Heliopsis*, *Celosia*, *Gomphrena*, *Helicrysum*, and *Helianthus*.

A town of 3,000 people surely needs a library, and most libraries these days need local support, so for the past 20 years the Free Public Library in Orwigsburg, PA has been staging a holiday home tour as its major fundraiser. Because the few florists surrounding Orwigsburg have graciously donated their services countless times in the past, homeowners have now begun to help out by creating their own decorations.

Hosts display family treasures like collections of handmade Santa Claus dolls or antique toys, as well as traditional trees, wreaths and swags. Bronwyn Tullock and Jim Helmke agreed to open their 19th-century stone home, but they hadn't counted on the amount of time it would take away from their two babies and respective jobs as brewmaster and project consultant at the Yuengling Brewery in nearby Pottsville. So I volunteered to help decorate their house, provided I could use natural materials, many from my garden, Meadow Lark Flower & Herb Farm.





Above top: Willow arch for the birds: millet, greens, clementines, sunflowers, bittersweet berries, holly and wheat.

Above bottom: The mantle is decorated with a boxwood wreath made of variegated Oregon grape holly, false cypress, juniper greens and winterberry holly.

Opposite page: Variegated and Oregon grape holly and evergreen boughs with pinecones.

The Tullock/Helmke home was built around 1750 as a gristmill powered by the flow of the nearby Pine Creek. The home was restored in 1998 and now combines the best of old and new elements. For the decorations, I gathered white pine, blue spruce, boxwood, fir, variegated holly and green-leafed holly, winterberry 'Sparkleberry', bittersweet, sunflower seed heads, stalks of sorghum, seed puffs of goat's beard, wheat, gourds, and pine cones. I begged a neighbor for golden thread cypress and berried juniper. And from the local supermarket, I bought those fruits that I couldn't grow: clementines, persimmons, cranberries, kumquats, limes, lady apples, and baby purple onions.

GREETING THE GUESTS

Near the front door of the house, an arch-shaped trellis greets tour visitors. Though heavy with climbing roses in late spring, the trellis in December looks almost bare and cries out for decoration. I choose a bird-feeder theme, wrapping greens to the trellis with a spool of florist wire. Next comes bittersweet, which I weave in and out around the frame. No need for wire in this step because the vine twists so easily. I tuck stalks of sunflower seed heads, sorghum and wheat into the frame and push small lengths of wire through the top of each orange and tie them to a cross bar, allowing the clementines to dangle like ornaments.

The final touch is a small handcrafted bird nested in moss near the center of the frame. An old sled next to the arch sports an informal swag of mixed greens, held by a plastic cable tie from the hardware store—my favorite method of securing big bunches.

THE MANTELPIECE

Clear the decks! I remove everything that usually decorates the mantel to make a fresh start, placing a wreath of fresh boxwood and holly against the wall (unlike some greens, these don't shed as they dry).

Since some materials dry up quickly when the fireplace is lit, I place some winterberry in a vase of water and insert the stems of evergreen into Oasis floral cages, which are bricks of floral foam backed in plastic. After the initial soaking, the foam can be kept moist with a long spouted watering can, extending the life of the greens. Candles should be placed well away from other materials.

ARRANGEMENTS

Two fresh arrangements in copper and pewter containers decorate the side tables. In the pewter pitcher, blue spruce with cones and holly mingle freely, and a small plate of persimmons, fresh from the supermarket, completes the design.



Winter Wonderland

Winter Wonderland



Clockwise from top: Cyclamen plants dressed up for the holidays.

A centerpiece composed of cranberries, limes, lady apples, clementines, and purple onions.

Garlands decorate this banister with a gooseneck gourd for accent.

Juniper greens, winterberries, and goat's beard seedheads in a copper teapot.







The second arrangement features juniper, winterberry and goat's beard (AKA salsify) seed puffs. While this latter wildflower abounds in the West, it is much less common in Pennsylvania. I grew it from seed purchased from the Brandywine River Museum wildflower conservation program some years ago, and each year I harvest enough for dried arrangements. The seed heads look equally beautiful as globes on a Christmas tree.

I pick the goat's beard puffs when they are half opened and stand them in containers indoors to finish maturing. Left to their own devices, they puff out and blow away, exactly like the more common dandelion, establishing new plants from seed. I often spray gently with clear lacquer to give them extra body.

BANISTER DECORATIONS

For roping and twining, I use any greens I have in abundance. I never prune or shape evergreens until holiday season, when I know I'll need lots of materials. That way, I can prune and gath-

er greens for arrangements at the same time.

For roping, I prefer old-fashioned clothes line and florist spool wire. I wrap small clusters of greens to the clothesline with the wire and continue wrapping until the rope is long enough to allow for drapes and swoops. In this case, I relax my rule of all natural materials by hanging glass ornaments from the garland once it's in place and using ribbon to tie the garland to the banister.

I decorate gourds with a quick coat of gold spray paint. They can be packed away with other permanent ornaments at the end of the season.

A FESTIVE CENTERPIECE

Folks on the house tour will surely want to see the dining room, so the table features an eye-catching centerpiece wreath created with simple supermarket ingredients. Starting with a 14-inch Styrofoam wreath form, I place the larger items first: three clementines (at 4 o'clock, 8 o'clock, and 12 o'clock), two lady apples near each orange, and limes, inserting them with round wooden toothpicks. (Tip: cover the wreath form with green sheet moss first to prevent any white Styrofoam from showing through.)

Then I insert the cranberries (using about four bags), tiny purple onions and kumquats at random, breaking toothpicks in half for the smaller elements. I make sure fruits are touching each other on all surfaces of the wreath (except the bottom), placing them almost on top of each other at slightly different levels to create a look of abundance. When finished, I show it off on a pedestal plate.

The wreath lasts about a week, depending on the room's temperature. For a longer life, it can be refrigerated overnight or until company comes, or hung outdoors in a protected spot.

FLOWERING PLANTS

Finally, a collection of holiday plants makes a splash in the living room. To make matching pot covers, I cut off the bottoms of small paper shopping bags, measuring the height so the finished size will just cover the rim of the plastic pots, then spray paint them gold, tie with a bow at the waist, and slip a saucer underneath.

Voilà! Not only does the house look festive, it smells great, too. Making your own decorations using natural materials may take a little more time, but there's nothing difficult about it. And since children love to help, it's a great way to get the whole family into the holiday spirit.

For further information on the 2003 house tour, call the Orwigsburg Library at 570-366-1638.

Ellen Spector Platt is the author of eight books on herb and garden topics. Her latest, *Garlic, Onions and Other Alliums* (Stackpole Books, 2003) includes some designs for decorating with alliums.

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BONSAI

From store-bought shrub...



The art of *bonsai* is often misunderstood in the gardening world. These carefully shaped and potted small trees are thought to be as temperamental and high-maintenance as new babies. But if you water your garden every day or two and regularly prune back shrubs, you already have many of the skills required for bonsai.

In this "how-to" article, we'll show you how to create a bonsai tree quickly and easily, mostly using tools you already own. In some places, we'll cut corners to make the task easier and allow you to create a bonsai without much fuss or expense. Later, you can learn about the correct tools, soils and pots. But right now, let's take a nursery-bought shrub and turn it into a charming small tree.



1

TOOLS

Serious enthusiasts use authentic bonsai tools, such as a concave cutter, root hook and leaf trimmer. But for our "beginner's bonsai," we'll use a good pair of handpruners, scissors, wire cutters and a regular wooden chopstick leftover from your last sushi dinner **1**.

You'll also need a shallow pot, preferably one officially made for bonsai, or one that's less than 4 inches deep. Finally, grab a bag of store-bought bonsai soil. If you're feeling adventurous and would like to make your own soil mix, bonsai artist Pauline Muth of PFM Bonsai in West Charlton, New York offers this recipe: "1/3 fine

BASICS to a trained beauty

Story by
Pete Prown
Photography by
John Gannon



gravel, 1/3 fine bark chips, and 1/3 Terragreen (this is a baked-clay product that golf courses use to aerate the soil. It is available at large commercial nurseries). This mixture should be sifted to remove fine dust. The particle size should be in the 1/8- to 1/4-inch range for general bonsai."

The only truly "specialty" item you need is annealed copper bonsai wire, which is specially processed to be soft and pliable, so don't substitute electrician's copper wire from a hardware store. You should be able to find bonsai wire at a good garden center.

SHOPPING FOR SHRUBS

One of the worst misconceptions about bonsai is that it takes years for it to grow into a pleasing shape. Granted, you can start bonsai from seed, but more experienced practitioners either buy shrubs at local nurseries or else dig them up, either from their own property or from neighbors and approved natural areas (obviously, with permission). That way, you're getting an "aged" specimen that's ready for styling.

If you want an outdoor bonsai, start with a juniper or other hardy conifer, as they're very resilient and easy to style. For this workshop, we'll use a shore juniper (*Juniperus conferta* 'Blue Pacific') bought at a local home center. If you'd prefer an indoor plant, try working on a *Ficus* (for more on the differences between indoor and outdoor bonsai, see page 22).

As you inspect the potted plants at the nursery, look for one with a thick, tapering trunk, preferably with an interesting twist or dramatic angle. Avoid shrubs with a thin, straight trunk. This makes it hard to convey the illusion of age, which is the goal of all bonsai. Most often, the thicker and more shapely a trunk, the better the final specimen will be.

Next, examine the trunk and choose one whose base shows spreading roots like those on old trees. You may have to use your fingers to find the actual base of the trunk, which may be a few inches below the soil line.











GETTING STARTED

Once you've picked out your plant and brought it home, take a few minutes to look at it from various angles. There are several major styles of bonsai, including *formal upright*, *informal upright*, *slanting*, *semi-cascade* and *cascade*, among others. While the informal upright is very popular, we're going to take a shot at a semi-cascade with our juniper, since it already has a low, spreading habit.

Many bonsai artists use a lazy Susan or a similar revolving platform to view their plants from many angles. Whether you use one or not, your first task is to determine the front of the tree. Remove the shrub from its pot, place it on the platform, and spin it around a few times (note: it's a good idea to keep the roots moist when out of the pot, so keep a mister filled with water handy). Look for its most appealing side, where you get the most interesting vantage point of the trunk. Often this is the side that has the least branches. Insert a chopstick into the soil, so you won't lose the spot **2**.

First, remove the plant from its store-bought plastic container and start removing soil from the bottom third or half. Bonsai artists use a "root hook" to facilitate the process, but as a substitute, try using a standard hand fork or hand rake to pull soil away from the roots. Again, since a bonsai's growing medium is coarser and more free-draining than conventional soil, you'll want to get rid of much of the potted soil your plant came with.

You'll also encounter lots of stringy roots from your potted plant. Trim them with scissors or, if too thick, a hand-pruner, removing one-third to one-half of the entire root mass **3**. Now, you're ready to style your bonsai **4**.

BEGINNING TO TRIM

Next is the most difficult part—visualizing which branches to remove and which to leave on. There are a few hard-and-fast tricks, however. First, if you recall that the illusion of bonsai is to create the appearance of an old tree in a small pot, then you mimic certain attributes of actual large trees, such as the lack of lower branches on the trunk. In an ideal bonsai (especially an upright type), the lower third of the trunk will not have any branches **5**.

Also cut any secondary branches away from the trunk **6**. This helps delineate the main trunk and branch system. You generally don't want to

obscure this crucial part of the picture with too much foliage. Another trick is to cut away any foliage on the underside of branches. Since foliage tends to grow upwards *towards* sunlight in nature, foliage or secondary branches that are on the underside will die due to lack of sunlight. Also remove vigorous, upright secondary branches as they suggest youthfulness.

Unless you're intentionally going for a formal look, you'll want branches that ascend the trunk a few inches or centimeters apart, so stagger the main branches, locating only one branch at each level. As you get higher up the trunk, the branches should also start getting closer together. The lowest branches should be the heaviest as they are the oldest.

Okay, our bonsai is beginning to look more "tree-like." Often, there's a point at which you don't know whether to remove certain large branches or not. If you cut the wrong branch, sometimes your design can be severely impaired. One easy trick is to use paper towels or a rag to cover up a particular branch, allowing you to view the tree as if you had already cut the branch off **7**. Then, once you find the right branch to remove, carefully cut it off with your pruners **8**.

GETTING WIRED

Wiring is the subtlest part of bonsai craft and takes many years to master. It is the one act that takes a nicely shaped tree and manipulates its trunk and branches into something truly artful. It would require more pages than this article allows to thoroughly cover the subject, so we'll just look at some basic principles.

The point of wiring is, in essence, to change the direction in which a given trunk or branch extends. For example, you can take a straight, thin branch, wire it, and carefully bend it into a series of undulating curves. In a few months, once you remove the wire, the branch will hold that shape for quite a while. Think of this analogy: what braces do to teeth, wire does to the branches of a bonsai tree.

In this photograph, we use our wire to pull a few of our shore juniper's branches into more pleasing positions **9**. You can wire a tree as thoroughly as you want—some people wire just the main branches and/or trunk, while others wire every single branch and twig to create a highly detailed look **10**. Just remember to move the branches only a little at a time. If you are too rough, you may snap a branch off, which may necessitate a complete re-thinking of your design.

The wire is usually left on the bonsai for about 6 to 10 months. Remove it by clipping it off with wire cutters (don't try to unwind the wire or you could pull some bark off). It's important, too, to keep an eye on your wired bonsai. If you see signs of the bark growing over the wire or if the trunk starts looking "bloated," remove the wire immediately. (This is where an authentic bonsai wire cutter comes in handy, as it cuts wire at the tip of the tool and will not harm the branch.)


7


8


9


10

INDOORS OR OUT?

One reoson for bonsoi's reputotion os "high mointenance" hos been spowned by non-gordening retoilers who sell them os gifts. Cute bonsoi plonts thot one finds ovoiloble for gifts ore generally junipers, which ore outdoor plonts. Alas, the bonsoi usuolly doesn't come with instructions to ploce it outdoors. Furthermore, the tiny juniper hos been stressed by sitting on o retoil shelf or sometimes in o box. Invoriobly, once the gift is given, the plont dies ofter o few weeks of sitting in o horsh indoor environment—deoth for o hordy, outdoor juniper.

If you want to grow indoor bonsoi, you hove o wide choice of tropicol ond other non-hordy plants: bougoinvilleo, ficus, Chinese peo tree, Fukien teo, Chinese privet, Josmine oronge, pomegranote, serisso, Chinese elm, ond mony others. The key thing with so-colled indoor bonsai is thot they often enjoy spending the summer outdoors, generolly in o port-sun oreo (full sun could possibly scorch ond kill the tree). Just remember to bring them bock in well before frost hits.

As for outdoor choices, pretty much the sky's the limit—your only limitotion is the gordening "zone" you live in (i.e., if you live in Pennsylvonia, you can't grow a ficus outdoors oll yeor long). Look oround the londscape ond in nurseries for the types of hordy shrubs and trees that are availoble ond choose occordingly. From conifers to deciduous trees, there ore likely to be dozens, if not hundreds, of good choices for outside bonsai in your oreo.

POTTING

The potting of a bonsai also requires careful consideration. Some nurseries sell pre-fabricated bonsai pots and soil, so if this is your first time out, that's probably the route to take. Later on, you can experiment with different types of soil and containers (from planting in rock crevices, to planting in shallow trays for landscape bonsai, known as *saikei*).

First, determine if it is the correct season to pot your tree, which is at the beginning of the tree's growth cycle (normally, springtime). It pays to wait. Remember that roots contain stored energy that will be used to create new foliage on your bonsai. You can buy and style a bonsai most anytime, but you might want to wait until spring to re-pot it.

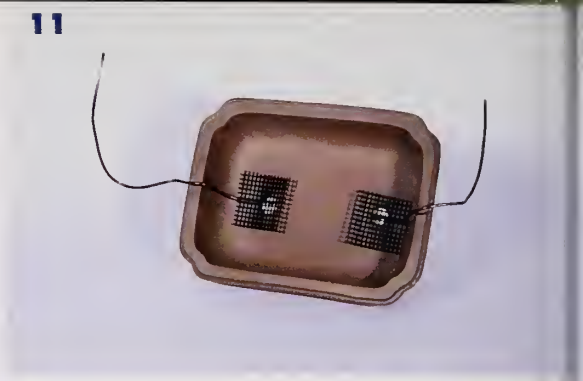
Once you have your pot, soil and styled bonsai, you're ready to begin the potting process. Place your bonsai into the container. If it sits up too high, remove more soil and/or roots, but not more than half, since your plant is already stressed from the styling and root trimming.

To keep your tree in place, you will wire it into the pot. Make a long, "U"-shaped piece of wire and thread it through the drainage holes of your pot. Over the wire, slide 1x1-inch sections of plastic screening to keep the growing medium in place **11**. Then wrap the wires around the base of the trunk just tight enough to keep it firmly in place.

Now you can pour in the bonsai soil mix. Important—rotate a chopstick in circular motions around the different areas of the soil to help work out any air pockets. You'll want be sure the soil is packed all around your plant **12**.

Now you can gently move branches into their final positions, as well as add moss, stones or other tasteful ornaments. Your last step is to water the bonsai thoroughly, either with the gentle spray of a hose nozzle or by submerging it in a tub of water (at the Rosade Studio, they add Super-Thrive to the water for extra vitality). Congratulations—you've just finished your first bonsai **13**!

11



12



13



MAINTAINING YOUR BONSAI

Now that you've created a beautiful bonsai, you need to learn how to keep it alive. First, put your plant in the right spot. Outdoor bonsai stay outdoors all year round and need water every 1 to 3 days, depending on conditions. Tropical or "indoor bonsai" (such as a ficus or bougainvillea) come outside in late spring (around June 1 in Zone 6) and come back indoors in late summer (around September 15). The rest of the year they should stay indoors in a bright room, sitting on a pan filled with small pebbles and water to increase humidity. Water them regularly. Also remember that bonsai soil is a growing medium, not a true soil, so you must fertilize the bonsai according to the needs of the species.

During growing season, keep grooming your bonsai. You can pinch off new branches to keep your tree in shape or re-wire a branch to steer it in a new direction. Part of the fun of bonsai is that it's a never-ending project—a bonsai is never actu-

ally completed. Like a garden, it's always evolving and growing.

Now that we've completed this basic workshop, it's up to you to learn more, either by taking a bonsai class or joining a bonsai club. Also, cruise the Internet to find a few of the many useful websites. And most of all, have fun. Bonsai is form of gardening that becomes happily addictive, sometimes for life. And you'll never look at a nursery-grown shrub the same way again.

Special thanks to Pauline Muth, owner of PFM Bonsai and secretary of the American Bonsai Society, for reading this article and offering helpful suggestions.

BONSAI RESOURCES AT PHS'S MCLEAN LIBRARY

Books

- *The Art of Flowering Bonsai* (1998) by Peter D. Adams.
- *Bonsai: A Care Manual* (1997) by Colin Lewis.
- *Bonsai in Your Home: An Indoor Grower's Guide* (1994) by Paul Lesniewicz.
- *Bonsai Life Histories* (2002) by Martin Treasure.
- *Bonsai Survival Guide: Tree-by-Tree Guide to Buying, Maintaining, and Problem Solving* (1996).
- *Growing Classic Bonsai* (1998) by Gordon Owen.
- *Keeping Your Bonsai Alive & Well* (1995) by Herb L. Gustafson.

Videos

Basic Bonsai Care: Basic Care of Northern Hardy Evergreen and Deciduous Trees (1993; 30 mins.), presented by Bob Johnston.

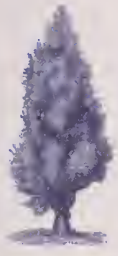
Bonsai: The Art of Training Dwarf Potted Trees (1990; 22 mins.), presented by Brooklyn Botanic Garden.

Exploring Bonsai: An Easy Guide to Creating Miniature Trees (1990; 45 mins.), presented by Robin Tate.

Library books and videos may be borrowed by PHS members.

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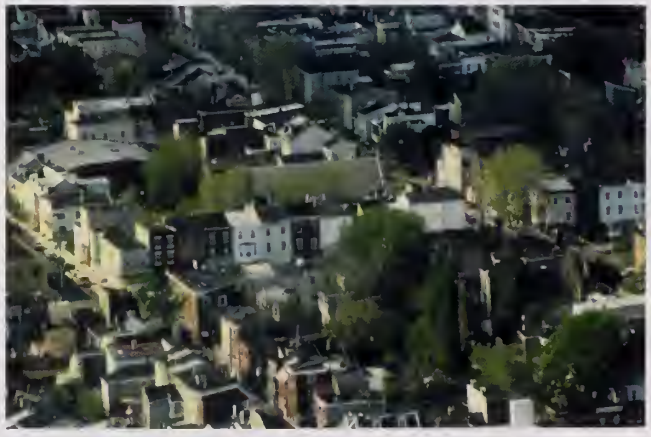
By Jane Carroll

John Gonnon

As we entered the new millennium, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society unveiled a "Green City Strategy" for Philadelphia. Based on the 30-year work of PHS's Philadelphia Green program, the Strategy is a distillation of experience in reclaiming vacant land, community greening and long-term landscape management. Rooted in the premise that open spaces are essential to the viability of the city, the Strategy calls for a significant investment in Philadelphia's green infrastructure as a tool for revitalization.

"The Green City Strategy really takes a comprehensive approach to our city's green spaces and considers greening as fundamental, not only to the quality of life in Philadelphia, but also to the city's economic development efforts," says J. Blaine Bonham, Jr., executive vice president of PHS.

The Green City Strategy has become a vital component of Philadelphia Mayor John Street's ambitious Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI). The Strategy calls for clearing vast amounts of trash and debris from untended vacant land—*one million square feet in all*—and transforming it into clean, usable areas that can attract new development or become permanent neighborhood open space. It includes greening initiatives such as community gardens, parks, downtown public spaces, commercial corridors, and neighborhood gateways. To encourage residents to become stewards of their neighborhoods, it also includes new education and training opportunities.



Work began in the summer of 2003, and the sites completed so far demonstrate that the Green City Strategy can yield dramatic results. This concerted effort conveys the message that the city is serious about its mission of neighborhood transformation, bringing hope to residents of formerly blighted areas and spurring further investment in greening.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS

Over the past four years, Philadelphia Green has developed a highly successful model for "stabilizing" vacant land by replacing abandoned, trash-strewn lots with "clean & green" landscapes planted with

grass and trees and bordered with wooden fencing. This approach immediately improves the appearance of blighted neighborhoods, discourages illegal dumping, and makes the land available to the community for future purposes.

As part of NTI, PHS and the city will stabilize an additional one million square feet of derelict vacant land in six target neighborhoods: Eastern North Philadelphia, North Central Philadelphia, West Philadelphia/ Mantua, South Philadelphia, Frankford, and East Mount Airy. The city will demolish abandoned buildings and perform initial cleaning of the sites, and PHS will transform the lots into clean & green spaces. To encourage citizen participation in transforming neighborhoods, one million dollars has also been earmarked to employ community-based organizations to perform periodic maintenance of additional lots that receive an initial cleaning by the city.

"This approach gives residents a direct role in improving the appearance of their own environment, investing the community in the success of the project," says Philadelphia Green associate director Maitreyi Roy. "We hope it will become a model for ongoing vacant land management efforts citywide."

In many cases, this community-based approach has the added benefit of transforming lives as well as landscapes. One group, Self Inc., a homeless shelter for former substance abusers, has two contracts, in North Philadelphia and West/Southwest Philadelphia, employing about 40 men. In addition to paying a modest salary, the work bolsters their self-esteem and helps them put their lives back together, according to Nate Robinson, Self's director of shelter operations and community relations.

"It's had a tremendous impact on our clients," says Robinson. "It gives them an opportunity to put something positive back into the community, and at the same time, it addresses a problem that has plagued the neighborhood."

PARKS, GARDENS & CITY BLOCKS

For the past 10 years, Philadelphia Green has worked in partnership with local volunteer groups and the city's Department of Recreation to revitalize and improve neighborhood parks. Exceeding NTI's goal of enhancing 23 parks, grants were awarded to 31 parks for specific improvement projects, such as tree pruning, fountains, and community events.

As part of the Strategy, Philadelphia Green initiated a new partnership with the Fairmount Park Commission, which oversees many neighborhood parks not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Recreation. One of these parks, Hunting Park, became the site for the annual "Fall for your Park" event. More than 200 volunteers from all over the city converged on the park on October 11 and planted bulbs, trees, and new garden beds. They cleaned, weeded, painted the recreation building, and generally transformed the park in one day, demonstrating what can happen when residents come together to improve their neighborhoods. Says Phil Goldsmith, Philadelphia's managing director, "The parks are a great asset for the city, and this kind of community effort shows how important they are in people's everyday lives."

While Philadelphia Green has expanded its scope of work throughout the city, it remains committed to the creation and support of community gardens—a hallmark of the program's beginnings. Funds from NTI will support the creation of 20 new community gardens. In some cases, old gardens that had been abandoned will be revived and started anew.

And what better way to bring a neighborhood block together than by getting homeowners to spruce up their front yards with flowering containers. These so-called "garden block" projects are simple, effective beautification endeavors that immediately make neighborhoods more appealing. Moreover, this project makes it possible for neighbors to meet, often for the first time, and share the pleasures of gardening. At least 20 to 30 households must participate on each block, and each household receives one planter. PHS provides soil and plants, assists with planting and maintenance, and provides hands-on training where needed.

Margaret Funderburg



A lot in North Philadelphia, before and after the "greening" process.

THE POWER OF PARTNERS

In 2001, PHS was invited to become a consultant to Mayor John Street's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI), an ambitious, citywide anti-blight campaign that includes—among other objectives—the demolition of vacant buildings and removal of debris from abandoned land. The city subsequently adopted the Green City Strategy as part of NTI and, in June 2003, awarded a $4 million contract to PHS to begin implementation of the Strategy, with the aim of making a significant impact within a single year—from July 1, 2003 through June 2004.

Taking advantage of this unprecedented commitment from the city, PHS identified specific goals for fiscal year 2004 that will make an immediate impact as part of NTI, dramatically improving the appearance of selected neighborhoods. These efforts are integrated with PHS's ongoing urban greening efforts, leveraging further support and long-standing partnerships, such as those with The Pew Charitable Trusts, the William Penn Foundation, and the city's Office of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation.

A LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

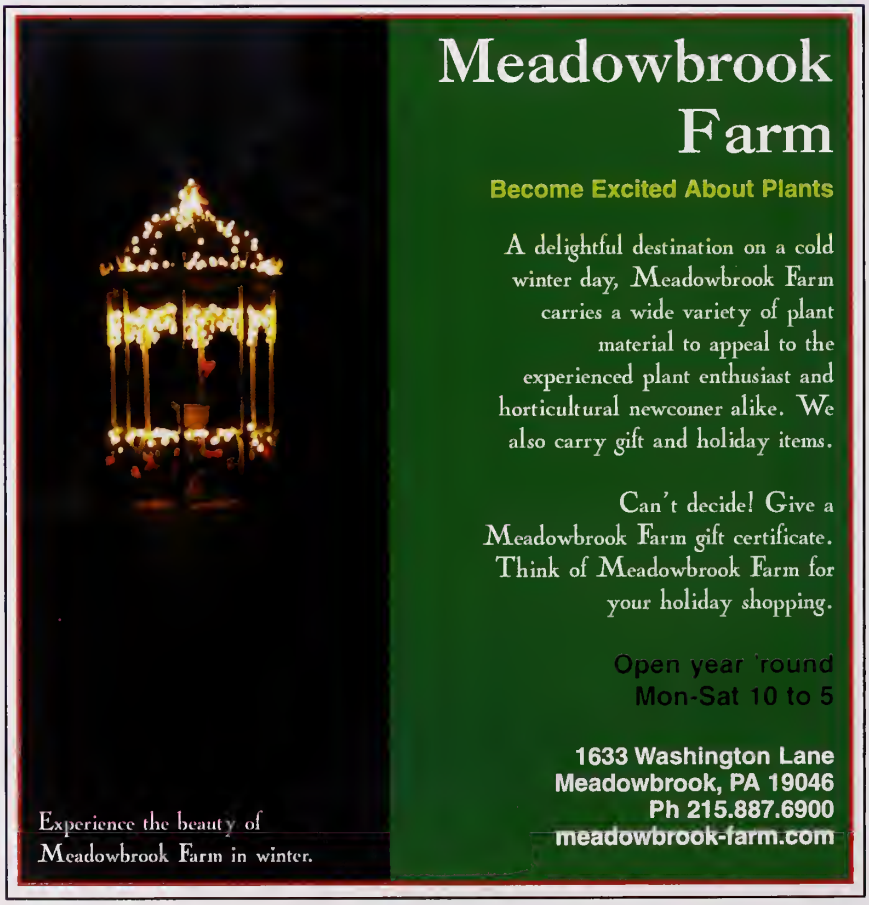
Empowering city residents to improve their lives through greening has also been a vital aspect of PHS's educational work from the beginning. In an effort to reach even more people, the organization created the City Gardening Series, which includes a new partnership with the Free Library of Philadelphia. Seventy-five lectures and workshops—scheduled through August 2004—will be presented at neighborhood library branches, many in neighborhoods not previously served by Philadelphia Green. (To find out more about these events, visit our website—*pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org*—and click on the Calendar page.)

BEAUTIFYING THE DOWNTOWN LANDSCAPE

PHS also works to improve the appearance and vitality of downtown public landscapes. It currently oversees the rehabilitation and management of several high-profile sites—including the grounds of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Azalea Garden, John F. Kennedy Boulevard, the 26th Street gateway from the airport, and the planting beds at City Hall. Through consulting contracts, PHS has improved and now manages the landscapes at Penn's Landing, the medians along Columbus Boulevard, the "cover parks" above I-95, and the green swards along that highway in Society Hill. PHS also worked with the Streets Department to plant trees around Independence Mall and along Chestnut Street in Center City and manages the maintenance of containers and trees for the Center City District.

This year, PHS initiated an Open Space Plan for Center City, which will sketch a broad vision for Philadelphia's downtown green spaces and will be used to advocate for future investment in them.

Investing in a greener downtown will do much more than improve Center City's appearance, according to Patrice Carroll, metropolitan initiative coordinator for the USDA Forest Service, Northeast Area, who serves on the plan's advisory group. "Studies show that greening—especially in high-density areas like Philadelphia—offers a broad



range of social, environmental, and economic benefits, including stress reduction, improved air quality, and livelier shopping districts," she says.

A GREEN FUTURE

The Green City Strategy holds tremendous promise for Philadelphia's continuing revitalization. Its long-term success, says Mayor John Street, "will be measured by the number of residents who choose to stay in their neighborhoods rather than move out of the city."

The Strategy's immediate impact is evident not only in the much-improved appearance of newly green neighborhoods, but also in the hearts and minds of residents, who now view their communities in a whole new light.

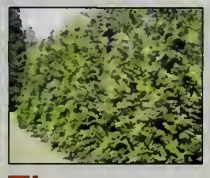
"It lends hope to the future," says Juanita Story-Jones, a community activist from the Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. "It shows that this is a place for investment, a place to live, a place to enjoy."

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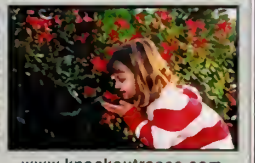
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LETTUCE REJOICE

by Jane G. Pepper, PHS president

GROWING FINE SALAD GREENS AT BLUE MOON ACRES

"Their quality is always excellent," says Martin Hamann, executive chef at Philadelphia's Four Seasons Hotel. He's referring to the micro-greens he purchases from Blue Moon Acres, a grower of organic specialty salad greens in Bucks County. "And besides," he continues, "they offer a much broader selection of product than we have been able to find from other growers in the region."



Opposite page: Red mustard micro-greens.

In addition to tiny shoots of lettuce, beets and peas, Blue Moon Acres distributes hundreds of pounds of baby chives, micro fennel, watercress and amaranth to chefs from Florida to Maine. At the Four Seasons Hotel, Hamann (pictured above) receives two deliveries each week, the same as chefs in New York City, where Blue Moon has its greatest concentration of accounts. Chefs purchase their requirements from the greenhouse.

Kathy and Jim Lyons, owners of Blue Moon Acres, moved to their 7-acre farm in Bucks County in the mid-1980s. Kathy was a home economics teacher; Jim had been in natural food sales. Together, they had developed an interest in organ-



ic gardening. At first, they used their property to run a community-supported agriculture farm, where families would buy shares and collect their produce once a week. Several years into this adventure, they realized they just didn't have enough land to make the farm work financially, so they decided to grow micro-greens, a product that became popular in Europe and Canada. Blue Moon Acres was the first to offer organically-grown micro-greens in Manhattan. A relative introduced them to the chef at the New York Yacht Club, and from this one account, the business has grown into several hundred accounts.

Four years ago, with increased competition from big growers in places as far apart as San Juan and California, Kathy and Jim decided they had to expand if they were to survive, so they put up a large new greenhouse. "Some growers," says Kathy, "grow micro-greens hydroponically, but we believe that ours, which are grown in a mixture of vermiculite, perlite and peat, have not only much better flavor, but also a longer shelf life." If well-grown micro-greens are treated right, they should remain in good shape for almost a week.

A micro-green is a product that is no more than 1-1/2 inches tall. The time from sowing to harvesting depends on the product. Pea shoots take 13 days; beets 16 days. At the Four Seasons Hotel, Martin Hamann and his colleagues use micro-greens for garnishing, and they are also very popular in the trademark "Fountain Salad," made in the Fountain Restaurant.

Kathy and Jim Lyons seem to have worked out a

Jane Pepper



Above: Co-proprietor Kathy Lyons.



good division of labor between them in a business that employs about 20 people, half of them full-time. Jim is the innovator, who's constantly seeking new products, new sources for supplies and ways to make the business more efficient. Kathy not only sells, but also is in charge of production, assigning teams of employees to jobs that vary from mixing the growing medium to sowing seeds, monitoring the watering and—one of the least favorite jobs—dumping the used growing medium and sterilizing the plastic growing trays.

Kathy also oversees the production numbers, trying to figure out the requests that come in each week. In winter, this is a special challenge because the greens take about 20% longer to reach cutting height. Fortunately, Blue Moon is able to rent greenhouse space to tide them over during these dark growing days. As consumers, we eat out more over the holidays (through November and December) and also again in the spring, so Kathy must adjust the sowing regime for these periods of peak demand.

Kathy describes her pleasure in the sales part of her job. "Chefs," she said, "have unique personalities and they are artists. I love trying to match our products with their needs. We were," she adds, "the first farm to offer popcorn shoots for the US market."

In addition to the micro-greens, Jim is experimenting with a new product that's taller than the micro-greens, but shorter than *mesclun*, and that is harvested when the greens are about 3 inches tall. Recently, they built a new hoop house, where they should be able to harvest this mid-sized product with



Left: Baby greens mix.

LETTUCE REJOICE

no heat until December. Kathy calls the house a high tunnel. The tall hoop is about 12 feet tall and the seeds are planted at ground level. In summer, they cover the plants with a layer of fabric to reduce insect damage. When the weather turns cold, they place a layer of plastic close to the ground, just above the plants, to provide the greens with extra protection.

The challenges of growing at Blue Moon Acres are many and varied. "Clients," says Kathy, "think we have total control because we grow in greenhouses. But the amount of sunlight has an enormous effect on our ability to produce a good crop in the requisite amount of time. During the cool and damp spring of 2003 for instance, we had 16 weeks of cloudy weather. We have grow lights, but not only are they expensive to run, they are almost totally ineffective for enhancing growth on micro-greens. If you are growing a plant to maturity, they work well, but with micro-greens, whose harvest cycle is so short, they provide little benefit." Wet weather also adds to the condensation inside the houses and the resulting conditions produce perfect breeding grounds for fungal diseases. Pests are not a major problem, because the staff works very hard at keeping the houses clean.



Red orach micro-greens.

The health of the economy has a direct impact on Blue Moon Acres, and the disasters of 9/11 were particularly severe for the business. Some of their New York City clients were wiped out altogether, and, almost overnight, Blue Moon's business dropped by 65%. "Some accounts," says Kathy, "have never really recovered as chefs seek to reduce the price of dishes and replace micro-greens with less costly garnishes." So she has been busy recently in her sales mode.

Blue Moon Acres' product list, depending on the time of year, can run to 35 micro-green items, ranging from red kale to baby bok choi. The most popular mixes are the baby greens mixes, with nine items, and the Asian and Petite mixes. Tuesday through Saturday, the farm is open for retail visitors from 10 am to 5 pm. In summer, Lyons and her team augment the product offerings for local residents with bouquets of delphiniums, zinnias, sunflowers, snapdragons and other flowers. They also offer edible flowers and specialty herbs for restaurant customers. Among the edible flowers, the most popular are the small flowers such as johnny-jump-ups and borage, and composite flowers that chefs can shatter and spread across a plate.

Next time you have the pleasure of dining in a fine restaurant, look at those flowers on your plate or the tiny greens in your salad and try to imagine the painstaking care the growers and chefs took to get them to you looking so beautiful. It almost seems a shame to eat them.

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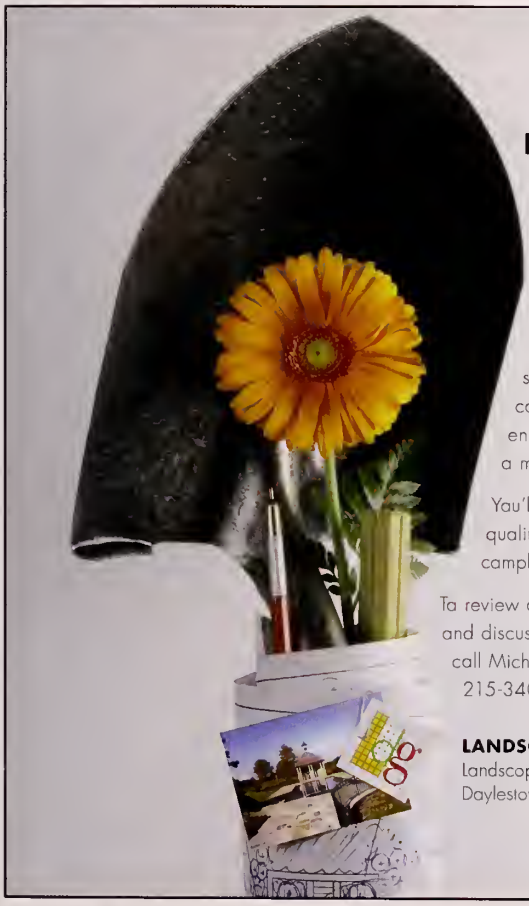
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Foliage Matters

Welcome to the Dark Side

BY NANCY J. ONDRA •

No matter what colors you enjoy in your garden, pairing them with some dark foliage is the perfect recipe for turning so-so plantings into exciting and memorable combinations.

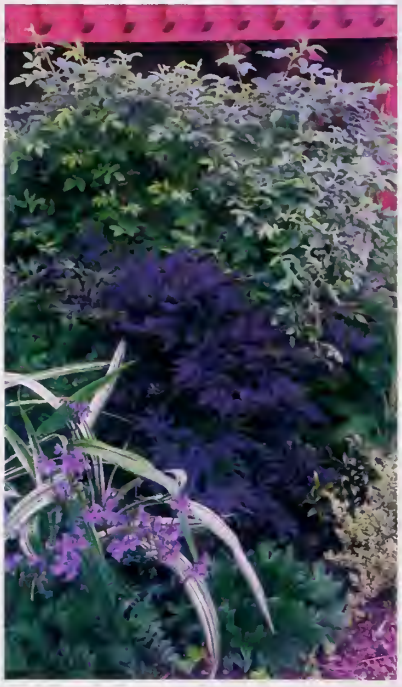
Are your pastel plantings just a little too sweet? Gardens based on pale blue, light yellow, and soft pink flowers can be very pretty, but sometimes, too much delicacy also gets a little cloying. Adding a few plants with dusky foliage can be just what's needed to give the bit of zip that balances things out. This past summer, I greatly enjoyed a little vignette of clear pink *Salvia coccinea* and deep maroon 'Purple Majesty' millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) against pink 'Versailles Tetra' cosmos and dark-leaved 'Diabolo' ninebark (*Physocarpus*). In another area, the lacy, deep purple leaves of *Cimicifuga* 'Hillside Black Beauty' made a dramatic contrast against the powder-blue foliage of *Rosa achburensis*. I'm not sure I liked it, but it definitely was eye-catching.

Could your bright borders use a bit of darkness to balance them out? Plum, purple, and maroon leaves can add that invaluable bit of moodiness that makes other colors all the more intense. If you overdo the dark foliage, you run the risk of creating a black-hole effect; masses of dark leaves can appear to blend into the mulch and leave large gaps between clumps of other colors. But when you scatter it judiciously through beds and borders, dark foliage provides exciting opportunities for both dramatic and subtle combinations.



Above: *Monarda* 'Jacob Cline' with *Hibiscus acetosella*.

Below: This combination emphasizes *Cimicifuga* 'Hillside Black Beauty' in the center, with the foliage of *Rosa achburensis* in the back and the daylily, *Hemerocallis* 'Kwanzo Variegata'.



Nancy Ondra

Purple, maroon, and red foliage looks fantastic partnered with "hot"-colored flowers, such as cardinal-red *Monarda* 'Jacob Cline' against the dark purple leaves of *Sambucus* 'Black Beauty', or bright orange cosmos (*Cosmos pinnatus*) underplanted with maroon 'Merlot' lettuce. Sometimes you can even find the whole package in one plant, as with the dark-leaved, orange-flowered dahlia 'Ellen Houston' or the canna 'Black Knight', with broad, purple leaves and rich red blooms.

If you're feeling especially adventurous, dark-leaved plants provide ample possibilities for creating striking contrasts. Consider combining them with white blooms and silver foliage to create a "black-and-white" border. Or try the same dark colors against chartreuse foliage—like the maroon leaves and stems of red orach (*Atriplex hortensis* 'Rubra') behind lacy yellow 'Isla Gold' tansy (*Tanacetum*)—for an unforgettable combo.

Are subtle pairings more to your taste? Purple foliage is super for echoing dark-centered daisies, such as coreopsis, rudbeckias, and sunflowers. Or use it to complement partners with purple stems, like a purple heuchera with *Salvia* 'Caradonna' or *Weigela* 'Wine & Roses' in front of Joe-Pye weed (*Eupatorium maculatum* and *E. purpureum*).

To be fair, I should warn you that some of the most beautiful dark-leaved plants can also be troublesome thugs. Purple-leaved loosestrife (*Lysimachia ciliata* 'Firecracker') spreads rapidly by creeping roots, while *Eupatorium rugosum* 'Chocolate', *Euphorbia dulcis* 'Chameleon', and *Perilla frutescens* can produce many unwanted seedlings. You may also choose to avoid Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). It has many stunning purple-foliaged cultivars, but it is also a serious invasive threat in several parts of the country, as its seedlings can quickly crowd out native woodland vegetation.

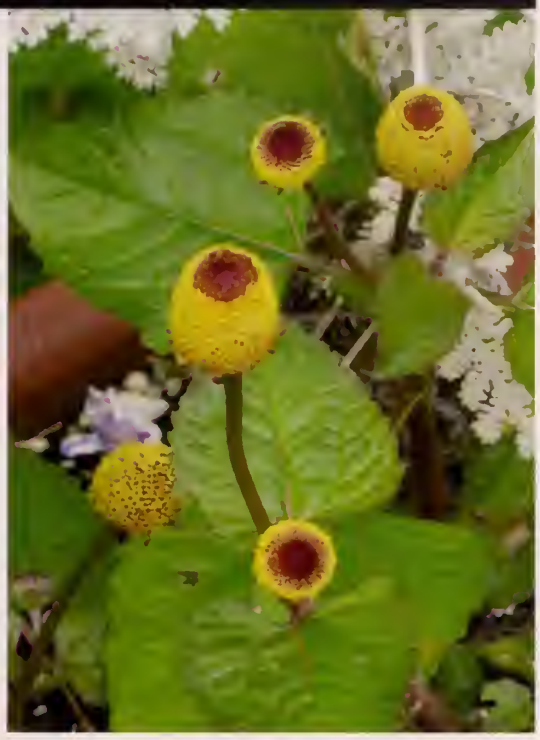
Fortunately, there are still plenty of other dark beauties that are safe to enjoy, so go ahead and give them a try—you'll love the results!



Nancy J. Ondra is a freelance garden writer who lives in Bucks County, PA. She has written several books including *Grasses: Versatile Partners for Uncommon Garden Design* (Storey Books)

Stranger than Fiction

• BY MARILYN ROMENESKO



What do eyeballs and caricatures have in common? Three things: they are both somewhat unusual annual plants, are quite versatile in their cultural preferences, and have strange common names. *Very* strange, in fact.

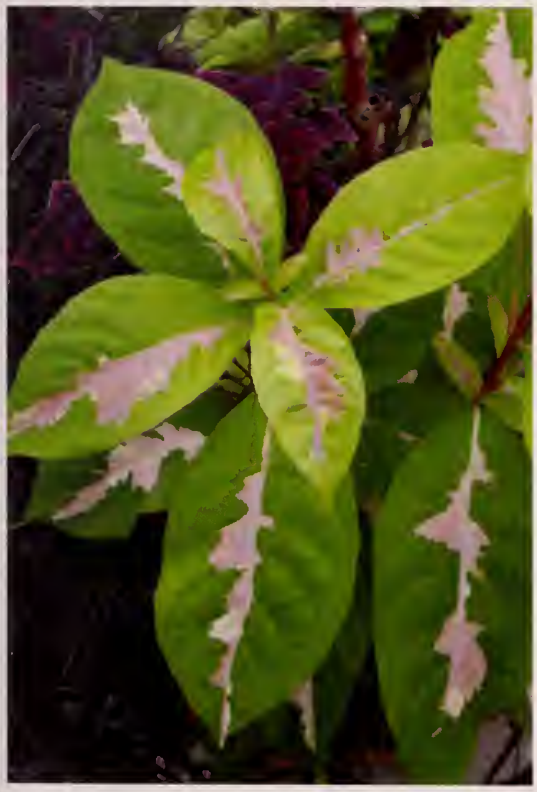
While paging through my Park Seed catalog recently, I noticed that the plant I've known as *Spilanthes oleracea*, commonly called Brazilian crest, is also called **eyeball plant** (pictured at right). This interesting annual from Brazil has oval shaped flowers with dark centers, which, I suppose, look like an eyeball. It is gold and brown in color and grows to approximately 18 inches in height. *Spilanthes oleracea* is a member of the ASTERACEAE family, and there is only one cultivar, 'Peek-a-Boo'. This plant prefers full sun to part shade and evenly moist, well-drained soil. I like it in container plantings where it complements plants of almost any color and texture. One might also try grouping it in the garden, but beware as you pass by, you may get the feeling you are being watched.

I spied another unusual plant, the caricature plant (*Graptophyllum pictum*, pictured below left), while visiting the Midwest. At first, it seemed a bit drab, but after growing it in a container with a very nice castor bean (*Ricinus carmencita* 'Pink'), I became enamored with the plant and its attractive foliage.

A member of the ACANTHACEAE family, the caricature plant has one cultivar, 'Chocolate', with shiny, almost brown foliage and a pink "caricature," or variegated portion. The species has dark green foliage with pink and white variegation. Shade or part shade and evenly moist soil are preferred, and the color of the variegation becomes more intense with the onset of cooler weather.

Last summer, my caricature plant grew to two feet in a container. It can be over-wintered indoors or used as a houseplant in high light. While the common name is descriptive, you really have to use your imagination to see a caricature in the foliage of this plant!

So while looking through your catalogs this winter, don't overlook those unusual plants that could add a little twist to your garden. You might never go back to the same old annuals again.



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A project manager for PHS's Philadelphia Green program, Marilyn Romenesko is a trained horticulturalist and ISA-certified arborist. She gardens avidly in Wilmington, Delaware.



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February Issue *(by December 1)*	**June Issue** *(by April 1)*	**October Issue** *(by August 1)*
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Send all advertising correspondence to: Laurie Fitzpatrick, *Green Scene*, The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, 100 N. 20th Street, 5th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103 -1495. If you have any questions, please call (215) 988-8769.

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SURF OUR NEW WEBSITE!

www.pennsylvaniahorticulturalsociety.org

After months of work, PHS unveiled its new website this fall. Featuring a colorful design and plenty of user-friendly features, the site now allows visitors to find the information they need...quickly and easily!

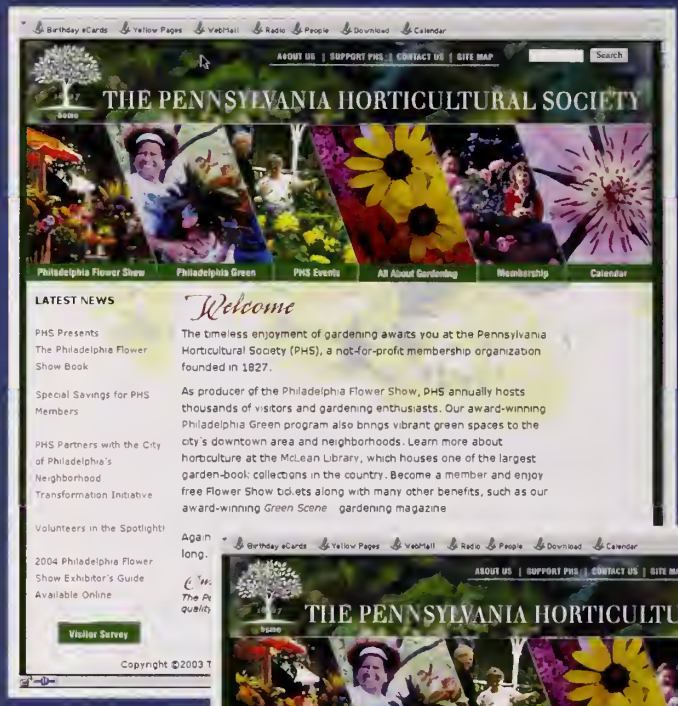
Central to the new design is a very fast **Search Engine**, which can locate whatever you're looking for in a jiffy, be it info on 2004 Flower Show tickets or recommendations on the best Gold Medal plants.

Another exciting tool is the **Calendar**, which lists many PHS events, lectures and workshops for the coming year. Use the **Keyword Search** box to find whatever it is you're looking for, or search by specific months, weeks or days. It's a great way to find out "where the action is."

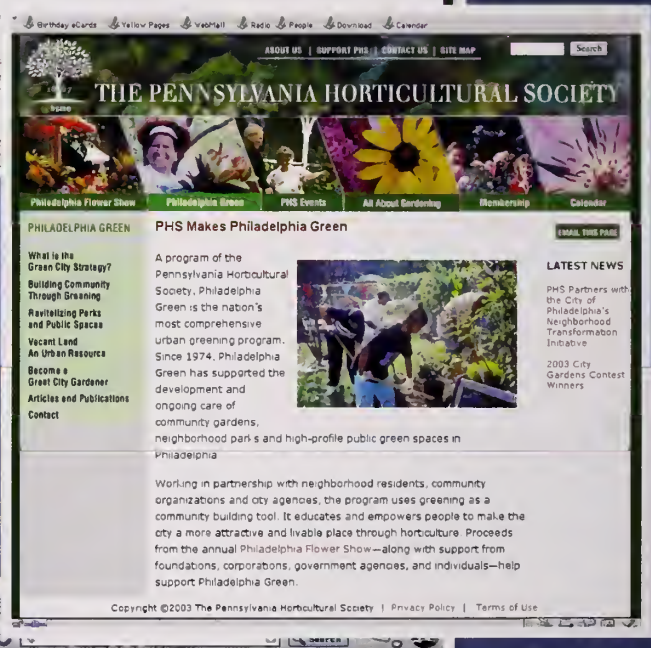
Finally, don't miss the **Latest News** stories on the Flower Show, Philadelphia Green, and PHS (home) pages to keep tuned into the latest happenings at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society. See you online!

—John Gannon

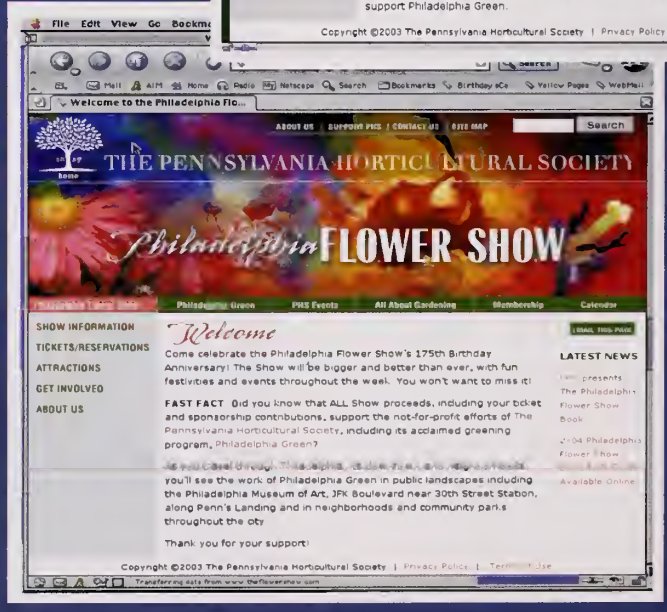
PHS home page



Philadelphia Green



Philadelphia Flower Show





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Sun., 11/30 Green Papaya
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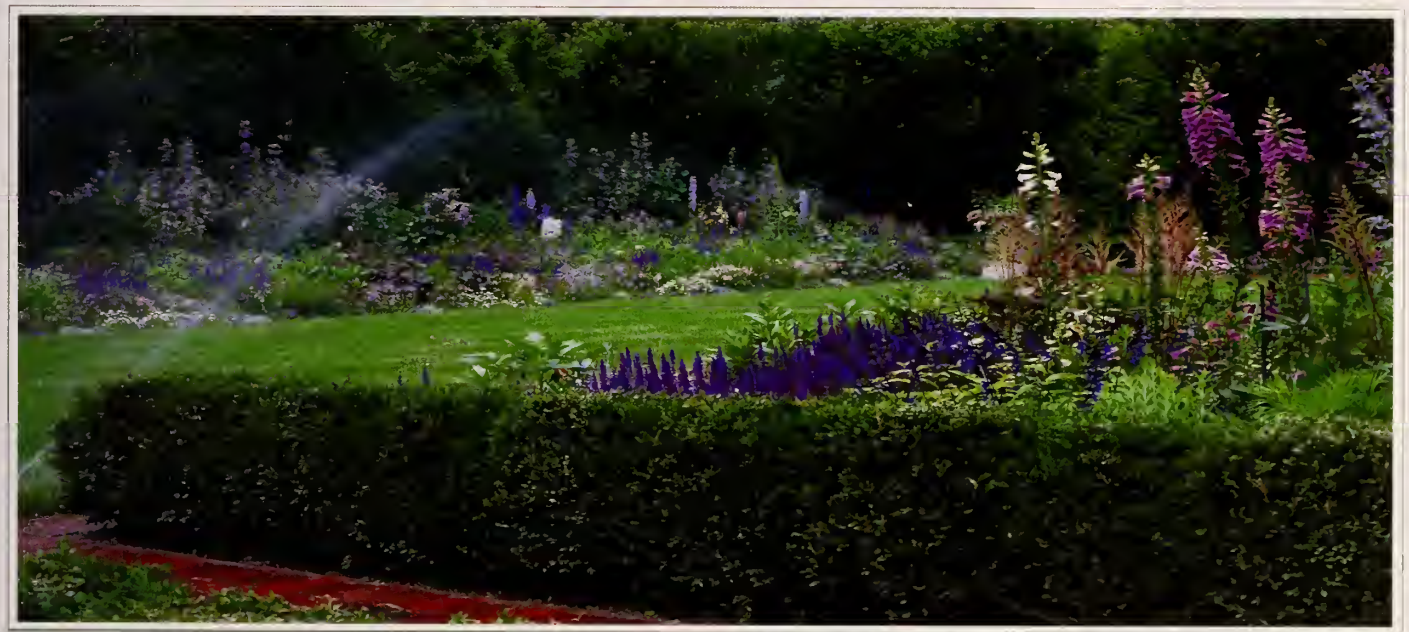
Sat., 12/6 Springdale Café
$25 OFF YOUR PURCHASE OF $100 OR MORE*

Sun., 12/7 Vincent's
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